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THE ATTACHE AT PEKING

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THE ATTACHE AT PEKING

BY

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PREFACE

THESE letters were written many years ago, but in China, and especially at Peking, the old order changes slowly, and they are at any rate a faithful record of the life which was led by those whose duties lay, as the Chinese say, "within the walls." They profess no more than that. Those who wish to learn more about China and Chinese manners must go to that monumental work of the late Dr. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, to Sir John Davies's fascinating book, *The Chinese*, or to Professor Douglas's book on Chinese society.

It will occur to many people to ask how it comes that we should have lived for so many years peacefully, travelling through the country unarmed, in the midst of a people capable of

the atrocities which have recently taken place. China is of all countries the land of contradiction and of paradox. But I think that those who read these letters will see that though, for obvious reasons, they were written in a spirit of optimism, there was an undercurrent of feeling that at any moment things might become very different. For instance, if the insurrection in Shantung had not been quelled, and the rebels had marched upon Peking, which was undoubtedly part of their programme, the tragedy of 1900 might, and probably would, have been anticipated in 1865. Moreover, although we were riding at anchor in smooth water, there were from time to time uncomfortable signs of disturbance below. I remember how on more than one occasion we were warned that on such and such a day there would be a massacre of Europeans for the old reason, the murder of babies whose eyes were used for purposes of photography. These stories were put about by intriguing mandarins, who succeeded in deceiving even some of the more ignorant of

their own class. The famous General Tsêng Kwo Fan (father of the Marquis Tsêng, who was afterwards minister in London) was talking one day with an English doctor on the subject of this babies'-eyes fraud, when suddenly he said, "It is no use your attempting to deny it, for I have here some of the dried specimens," and he pulled out a packet of those gelatine capsules which are used for covering castor oil and other nauseous drugs! We paid little heed to these warnings, though, as recent events have proved, there was perhaps more in them than we supposed. We were sitting on a volcano, for experience has often shown how swiftly this seemingly mild and almost childlike people can be lashed into a fury like that of the flaming legions of hell. One thing we knew for certain. If a rising should take place, we were in a death-trap from which there could be no escape. Those grim and frowning gates once shut, rescue was impossible, for what could a mere handful of men—in those days there were but some seventy or eighty Europeans, all told, in Peking—avail

against the seething mob of enraged devils? When years afterwards, in 1879, there came the horror of Sir Louis Cavagnari's murder, with all his company, at Cabul, I could but think how much the position of the Legations at Peking resembled his.

It is the fashion to belaud Japan for the spirit of progress which she has shown, at the expense of China, which remains wedded to old ways and worn-out customs. Much as we may admire the marvellous headway which Japan has made, this is hardly quite fair. It must be remembered that Japan has never originated anything. All that she knew, up to the time of her first real intercourse with foreigners forty years ago, she owed to China. Buddhism, which replaced and in some sort throve hand-in-hand with the old ancestor worship, the Shintô, reading and writing, every art and accomplishment, from music and dancing down to the game of football, all filtered through Corea from China to Japan, and the dates of their advent are solemnly recorded as important facts in the *O Dai Ichi Ran.*

"A Glance at the Generation of the Kings," the native history. Borrowers from the beginning of time, it mattered little to the Japanese whether they borrowed once more or once less, and so when they saw that if they wished to hold a place among the nations their only chance was to get rid of ancient Chinese forms and adopt the civilisation of the West, they did not hesitate—they took a leap into the light and left the thirteenth for the nineteenth century. To hear some enthusiasts talk one would almost be led to believe that the Japanese invented the nineteenth century. They found it ready made to their hand. It was impossible to go through the intermediate centuries. They had to skip, and they did it with a will. The transformation scene was as sudden as it was complete. But it cost the Japanese no sacrifice of national pride. What they gave up was none of their own invention.

The Chinese, on the other hand, have an autochthon civilisation of which they are justly proud. Five hundred years before Christ

came into the world—when the inhabitants of these islands were hopeless savages clad in skins, or stained with woad according to the seasons, if the old stories be true—Confucius was teaching respect for customs which were already ancient. Since his day there have been thirteen changes of capital and no fewer than thirty dynasties, but even when Tartar[1] emperors have sat upon the Dragon Throne they have been compelled to follow the rules of the Chinese, and civilisation has remained what it was "under the shadow" of the great Teacher. No wonder that the son of Han thinks a good many times before he will scatter his past to the four winds of heaven, as the Japanese did without a sigh!

In one sense the mandarins have been wiser in their generation than the men who made the Japanese revolution of 1868. These were the daimios, such men as Satsuma, Tosa, Choshiu,

[1] There have been five Tartar dynasties—the Liao, A.D. 907-1125; the Western Liao, A.D. 1125-1168; the Chin, which came to an end in A.D. 1234; the Yüan, ending A.D. 1341, and the Ching, or present dynasty, which began in A.D. 1627. (I have not taken into account some overlappings of reigns which would need long explanation.)

and their karôs (elders or councillors), who thinking to overthrow the Tycoon and his rule, were blind to the fact that in so doing they were working their own downfall as well as his. For they, no less than he, were the embodiment of the feudal system. Where are they now? *Où sont les neiges d'antan?* They have vanished, and their places are filled by a mushroom growth of dukes, marquises, counts, viscounts, and barons. For Japan has stopped short at nothing; not content with adopting the cocked hat, which as we all know is the very marrow of all good government, giving the *entrée* to the comity of nations, she has actually invented a full and complete peerage. Far more astute is the mandarin. Such wily anachronisms as Li Hung Chang and his compeers know full well that under the sun of Western civilisation they must melt away, and it is no matter for surprise that they die hard. All the myriads of officials, from the highest to the lowest, swarming like ants over that vast empire, are alive to the fact that their very existence depends on keeping up a constant animosity against the Hung Kwei

Tzŭ, the red devils. That has always appeared to me as the keynote of the situation.

Various causes are commonly assigned for the fanaticism against foreigners, which has from time to time broken out with fatal consequences in different parts of China. Some blame missionary enterprise; some commerce in general; others the opium trade in particular. My belief is that it is due to neither of these in itself, but to the dread of reform which haunts the official mind, and which in the end must win its way.

The Chinese are not by nature a people of strong religious convictions, nor have they any strong religious antipathies. If it were otherwise, how is it that a colony of Jews[1] has dwelt among them unmolested for two thousand years, and still remains, dwindling in numbers, it is

[1] They are supposed by Mr. Finn "to have belonged to the restoration from Chaldea, as they had portions of Malachi and Zechariah, adopted the era of Seleucus, and had many rabbinical customs." They were found, by two native Christians sent by Bishop Smith to inquire into their present condition, to be in abject poverty, ignorance, and dejection. They knew no Hebrew, but had been instructed in copying the letters of Holy Writ.—Wells Williams, *Middle Kingdom*, ii. 272.

true, at Kai Fêng in the province of Ho Nan? How is it that the Mohammedans have flourished exceedingly in certain provinces, even to becoming a danger to the empire? On the walls of the Imperial palace at Peking there is a pavilion richly decorated with Arabic inscriptions from the Koran in honour of a Mohammedan lady who was a wife, or favourite, of one of the emperors. This does not look like persecution for religion's sake. And, more than these, Buddhism? Ever since the Emperor Ming Ti dreamt a dream, nearly nineteen centuries ago, and sent for Buddhist books and images to China, Buddhism has been the popular religion, as Confucianism is the popular school of moral philosophy. Tao-ism, the native religion of Lao Tsŭ, cannot hold its own with it. Troublous days, indeed, it has gone through at various times, but it has outlived them, and now, to quote Dr. Morrison, "Buddhism in China is decried by the learned, laughed at by the profligate, yet followed by all." (See further Wells Williams, *ut suprà.*)

Why, then, this tolerance in certain cases,

side by side with the cruellest intolerance where Christianity is concerned? If it is not religious conviction, it must be political antipathy. And there is the rub. The bitter hatred of Christianity is not inborn in the people, who have in many instances, indeed, shown a sort of limp willingness, not altogether unconnected with better wages, to embrace its tenets; but the hostility is bred, fostered, and fomented by the mandarins to whom it means the end of their rule. Under a Christian dispensation the whole tottering fabric of their power must inevitably fall to the ground. The poor Jews were to them a negligible quantity. The Mohammedan creed, the sacred book of which may not be translated, presents for that reason but small terrors to the lettered class, though we hear of an old prophecy to the effect that there will be a great Mohammedan revolution, and that a Hui-Hui (Mohammedan) dynasty shall rule over China. Buddhism, on the other hand, except in Tibet, aims at no temporal power, and even there the Chinese Emperor is the Suzerain. But Christianity is a very real terror, to be put

down at any cost, however bloody. And yet, strange to say, there was a time when it seemed as if it were destined to conquer everything and to become the state religion. Internal dissensions and ambitions amongst its sects alone stopped its course.

The history of the early missions to China is full of interest; it is not possible, however, to do more than glance at it here. Putting on one side the dim legend that St. Thomas, the doubting apostle, was the first to preach the Gospel to the Chinese, there is no doubt that missionaries did visit them in very remote ages. It was two Nestorian monks who carried the first Eastern silkworms' eggs to Justinian in the sixth century (see my *Bamboo Garden*, pp. 31-33). It is strange at the present time to read how at the end of the thirteenth century John of Monte Corvino was sent by Pope Nicholas the Fourth to the court of Kublai Khan at Kambaluk (the ancient name of Peking); how he was kindly entreated there, building a church "which had a steeple and belfry, with three bells that were rung every hour to summon the new converts

to prayer"; how he baptized nearly six thousand persons during that time, "and bought one hundred and fifty children, whom he instructed in Greek and Latin, composing for them several devotional books." Clement the Fifth made him an archbishop, and sent him seven suffragan bishops. He died full of years in 1328, "having converted more than thirty thousand infidels." All Kambaluk is said to have mourned for him, Christians and heathen rending their garments at his funeral, and his tomb became the resort of pious pilgrims. This account, which will be found given at length in the third volume of the *Chinese Repository*, is probably not a little exaggerated; but even discounting it largely, it is very striking as an evidence of devotion on the one side and toleration on the other. "It is now twelve years," he wrote, "since I have heard any news of the west. I am become old and gray-headed, but it is rather through labours and tribulations than through age, for I am only fifty-eight years old. I have learned the Tartar language and literature, into which I have translated the whole New Testament

and the Psalms of David, and have caused them to be transcribed with the utmost care. I write and read and preach openly and freely the testimony of the law of God." Until the year 1368, when the Yuan or Tartar dynasty was driven out by the Chinese, and the Ming Emperors ruled first at Nanking and afterwards at Peking, Dr. Williams says "there is no reasonable doubt that the greater part of Central Asia and Northern China was the scene of many flourishing Christian communities." From that time forth, during upwards of two hundred years, they dwindled away so that nothing more was heard of them.

It was at the end of the sixteenth century that the Jesuits first began to exercise an influence which was very nearly overwhelming all rivalry in China. Saint François Xavier, the gospeller of India and Japan, had marked China as the special field of his future labours, but he died of fever at the island of Shang Chuen, near Macao, being only forty-six years old at the time of his death—a wonderful man, truly! But his work was destined to fall into

hands no less competent for the task than his own.

Matteo Ricci, the famous Jesuit father, was born at Macerata, in the Papal States, in 1552. At the age of nineteen he was sent to Rome to study law, which career he quickly abandoned, to his father's great displeasure, to enter the Society of Jesus. Here he came under the orders of Father Valignani, the Inspector-General of Eastern Missions, with whom, before he had even finished his noviciate, he went to India, continuing his studies at Goa, where he became professor of philosophy. In 1580 he followed Father Ruggiero to Macao, where the two priests gave themselves up to the study of the Chinese language. They availed themselves of the trading privileges of the Portuguese to visit Canton, and some two years later, not without encountering some difficulties and disappointments, they obtained the permission of the Viceroy of Kwang Tung to build a house at Shao Ching Fu, and a church. Ricci soon saw that a reputation for learning was then, as now, the only pass-

port to high consideration among the lettered classes. He published a map of China and a catechism, in which he set forth the moral teaching of Christianity, excluding carefully all that pertains to the doctrines of revealed religion. He had his reward, for many learned men came to consult him, and his fame spread far and wide. For some years the Jesuit fathers adopted the garments of Buddhist priests, but finding that these were treated with anything but respect, they, upon the advice of Father Valignani, dropped the yellow robes and assumed the garb of the men of letters, whom above all it was their wise endeavour to conciliate. Ricci paid three visits to Nanking, but on the second occasion he was expelled, and forced to go to Nanchang, where he established a school and published two treatises, the *Art of Memory* and a *Dialogue on Friendship*. This last work was a marvellous success, for it became famous not only "for the loftiness of its thoughts, but even for the purity of its style," a feat perhaps unique in a country where literary style is so much thought of, and so

difficult to attain, even by native scholars. In the year 1600 he achieved his ambition of going to Peking charged with presents for the Emperor Wan Li from the Portuguese at Macao. But the mission was not accomplished without difficulty. A eunuch of the court had offered himself as his escort, and with him Ricci set out in a native junk. But the presents of which he was the bearer had aroused the cupidity of the eunuch, who contrived to imprison Ricci and his companion Pantoja at Tientsing for six months. Happily the affair came to the ears of the Emperor, who ordered him to be released and brought to Peking, where he was kindly received by Wan Li, who assigned him a house and salary. Ricci soon made many friends and converts, of whom one named Sü helped him in the translation of Euclid. His secret of success was being all things to all men, and he contrived so to edit Christianity as to make it fit in with existing manners and customs, and to give offence to none. Among other things he allowed the rites of ancestral worship to be continued,

affecting to consider them as being of a civil and not of a religious character. In short, he followed the Buddhist system of incorporating, not condemning, those articles of native faith to have fought against which would have been fatal to his schemes. Father Ricci died in 1610, being fifty-eight years of age. If, on account of the laxity of his theological concessions, he cannot be called a great Christian missionary, he was at any rate a great conciliator, and it was no fault of his that the seed which he successfully sowed did not bring forth good fruit. He was possessed of rare talents, his learning was conspicuous in many branches, and his winning charm of manner commended him to the favour of high and low. He was perhaps the only European who ever acquired the Chinese literary style to such a degree as to call forth the admiration of native critics. To such an extent was this recognised, that about 150 years after his death his treatise on *The True Doctrine of God*, revised by a minister of state named Sin, was included in the collection of the best Chinese works

made by the order of the Emperor Chien Lung.

To follow a man so various and so plastic as Ricci was no easy task; but the Society of Jesus has never been wanting in men possessed at any rate of the latter quality, and Father Longobardi proved an efficient successor, though he did not make history. But there were troubles in store for the missionaries. Their successes aroused the jealousies of courtiers and officials, whose intrigues led to the publication of an edict banishing the Christian teachers. This decree, however, was never carried into effect. They had made many converts who protected them, and foremost among these were Sü (Ricci's special friend) and his daughter, christened under the name of Candida. These two Chinese converts were so famous for their virtues and so beloved for their charity, that they are actually worshipped to this day by the people at Shanghai, and the Roman Catholic Mission at Sü Chia Wei, near that city, occupies the property once held by the Christian Sü. Can-

dida was indeed a saintly woman. She built no fewer than thirty-nine churches; she published upwards of one hundred books; she established a foundling hospital for babies whom, then as now, their unnatural parents were in the habit of abandoning; and she employed the blind improvisatori of the streets to substitute Gospel stories for their obscenities and inanities. The Emperor himself conferred upon her the title of "The Virtuous Woman," and sent her a robe and headgear embroidered with pearls, which she stripped off to further her religious works with their price.

The beginning of the seventeenth century was a time of internal trouble and revolution in China. The old Chinese dynasty of the Mings was about to be replaced by the present Tartar dynasty, the Ching. That the Jesuits had become a real power in the land is proved by the fact that the claimant to the Ming throne was supported by the missionaries, his troops being led by two native Christian generals, Kiu who was called Thomas, and Chin who was baptized Luke. His mother,

wife, and son were christened as Helena, Maria, and Constantine, and Helena went so far as to write to Pope Alexander VII. "expressing her attachment to the cause of Christianity, and wishing to put the country, through him, under the protection of God"! (Wells Williams).

The Jesuits held a high position in the early days of the Tartar rule. This was due to the pre-eminent abilities of their leader, Johann Adam Schall, a man of good family, native of Cologne. This great priest was born in A.D. 1591, and entered the Society of Jesus at Rome in 1611. There he became a student of theology and mathematics, and left for China in 1622. His great learning won for him such renown that he was sent for by the Emperor in 1631, installed at Peking as court astronomer, and charged with the revision of the Chinese calendar. Needless to say this position was not won without exciting great jealousy among the native men of science, who attacked him fiercely, both openly and in secret. But his correct calculation of an eclipse, as to

which they were hopelessly wrong, defeated all their intrigues, and he was more than ever in favour with the Emperor Chung Ch'êng (the last of the Mings), who, in dread of the Tartars, caused him, much against his will, to start a cannon foundry, rewarding him with a pompous autograph inscription in praise of his science and virtue. When at last the Tartars became masters of Peking, Schall, though in continual danger himself, was able to give effectual protection to the Christian converts. It cannot fail to strike us with amazement that, like the Vicar of Bray, when matters settled down, Schall should have enjoyed even more favour under the Tartar Emperor Shun Chih than he had done under his Ming predecessor; and when, at that sovereign's death in 1662, he actually was holding the post of tutor to the young Emperor Káng Hsi, who became one of the most famous monarchs that ever ruled in China, it seemed as if nothing could arrest the progress of Jesuit influence.

But the supreme power was for a time in the hands of four regents who were opposed to

the Christians, and a memorial was presented to court denouncing the new sect as dangerous to the state. The Dominicans and Franciscans, of whom I shall speak presently, had, during a quarter of a century and more, been working in opposition to the Jesuits, and the internal dissensions of the sects gave their enemies an opportunity of which they were not slow to avail themselves. The memorial, a remarkable document, calls attention to the strife between the orders as to the worship of Tien (Heaven) and Shang Ti (God), which dissensions as to the principle of doctrine show the true aspirations of the rival sects to be political; and in this connection the memorialists call attention to the schisms and civil war to which Christianity gave rise in Japan, evils which could not fail to occur sooner or later in China if the missionaries were allowed to remain there. The regents, nothing loth, yielded to the wishes of the memorialists, and in 1665 the Christian teachers were proscribed as seducers of the people, leading them into a false path. Father Schall died miserably at

the age of seventy-eight, after having been for thirty-seven years the trusted and favoured servant of five emperors. His converts were degraded, and his colleagues imprisoned or banished.

Among those who were held in chains, beaten, and subjected to every indignity, was Father Verbiest, a native of Flanders, partly educated at Seville, the third of the great triad of priests who, by their talents, their learning, and their personal charm, so nearly succeeded in turning the current of Chinese history. For six long years who shall say what he suffered? Six years of the horrors of a Chinese prison! At last, however, the minority of the Emperor Kâng Hsi came to an end. He had not forgotten the good teaching of Father Schall, and one of his earliest acts, on assuming the power in 1671, was to release the priests, with Father Verbiest at their head. Kâng Hsi was not a Christian; but though he forbade his subjects to follow the new teaching, he was sufficiently liberal to put an end to persecution, and to recognise the value of Western learning.

There is a myth to the effect that an earthquake was the immediate cause of the release, but the truth is that the Emperor wanted Verbiest's astronomical science to set straight the crooked inventions of the native professors. The father was appointed court astronomer and chief mathematician. He was also ordered, as Schall had been, to cast cannon, which, with much pomp and ceremony, robed as for mass, he blessed, in the presence of the court, sprinkling them with holy water, and giving to each the name of a female saint which he had himself drawn on the breech. This brought him a letter from Pope Innocent XI., praising him for having so wisely brought the profane sciences into play for the salvation of Chinese souls. To Father Verbiest are due the wonderful mathematical instruments of bronze, beautiful as works of art, which are still one of the sights of Peking. They are in the Observatory at the southern corner of the Tartar city, where they remain as the last witnesses of the Jesuit greatness. Verbiest died in 1688, and the Emperor himself composed

the funeral oration, which was read with great pomp before his coffin. No three men ever succeeded in obtaining the favour of the Chinese court so signally as the three Jesuit fathers, Ricci, Schall, and Verbiest. When Father Verbiest died there was no man with a sufficiently commanding intellect to fill his place and continue his work.

It is conceivable that if they had not been thwarted by the Dominicans and the Franciscans, the Jesuits might have succeeded in their ambition even to the extent of Christianising China. But those two sects effectually put a stop to the process of conversion. The great bone of contention was the so-called worship of ancestors and of Confucius. Another point was the translation of the name of God by Tien, literally Heaven, and Shang Ti, for which there is indeed no other rendering. This last controversy, which has in it much that is childish, and mere splitting of hairs, is not worth discussing. The great point was to render the Sacred Name by some term that should be intelligible to the Chinese mind. Both seemed

to fulfil that condition. As regards the former question, we have seen how Father Ricci dealt with it. He saw the wisdom of not repelling the Chinese by at once condemning a custom to which they were so wedded that any attempt to do away with it would evidently alienate them altogether, so he, a true Jesuit, effected a clever compromise, treating the rites in honour of ancestors and of Confucius as civil and not as religious ceremonies. It always has seemed to me that he acted wisely, for in no other way could he have hoped to obtain any hearing. By degrees the Christianised Chinese might have been weaned from their old practices, and Christianity in all its purity have been made a dominant religion. This, however, is mere speculation.

When the Dominicans and Franciscans became aware of the successes of the Jesuits, they too resolved to have their share in the work, and they promptly sent out missions to China on their own account. But their school lacked the liberality and plastic nature of the Jesuits. They resolutely refused any com-

promise. They accused the Jesuits of countenancing idolatry and heathen practices, and one Morales, a Spanish Dominican, sent home a report to the Propaganda to that effect. This produced a decree from Pope Innocent the Tenth, in which the conduct of the Jesuits was censured and their doctrine condemned in 1645. It took the Jesuits eleven years to procure from Pope Alexander VII. another Bull, not indeed contradicting that of Pope Innocent, but one which might be so read as to give them a free hand. But the battle was not over, for in 1693 Bishop Maigrot, Vicar Apostolic in China, declared in the face of the Inquisition and the Pope that Tien meant the material heaven, and not God, and that the worship of ancestors was idolatrous. In this difficulty it is not a little strange to find that the Jesuits appealed to the Emperor Kâng Hsi to show them the way out. They addressed him in a memorial which is quoted at length by Wells Williams from the *Life of St. Martin*, and which is so curious that I am tempted to transcribe it, the more so as it

shows so clearly all the points of the great controversy :—

"We, your faithful subjects, although originally from distant countries, respectfully supplicate your Majesty to give us clear instructions on the following points. The scholars of Europe have understood that the Chinese practise certain ceremonies in honour of Confucius ; that they offer sacrifices to Heaven, and that they observe peculiar rites towards their ancestors ; but persuaded that these ceremonies, sacrifices, and rites are founded in reason, though ignorant of their true intention, earnestly desire us to inform them. We have always supposed that Confucius was honoured in China as a legislator, and that it was in this character alone, and with this view solely, that the ceremonies established in his honour were practised. We believe that the rites in honour of ancestors are only observed in order to exhibit the love felt for them, and to hallow the remembrance of the good received from them during their life. We believe that the sacrifices offered to Heaven are not tendered

to the visible heavens which are seen above us, but to the Supreme Master, Author, and Preserver of heaven and earth, and of all they contain. Such are the interpretation and the sense which we have always given to these Chinese ceremonies; but as strangers cannot be considered competent to pronounce on these important points with the same certainty as the Chinese themselves, we presume to request your Majesty not to refuse to give us the explanations which we desire concerning them. We wait for them with respect and submission."

Kâng Hsi cut the Gordian knot by declaring that "Tien means the true God, and that the customs of China are political." In spite of this Imperial opinion Pope Clement XI. upheld Bishop Maigrot, declared that Tien Chu, Lord of Heaven, must be the name for God, Tien and Shang Ti being altogether inadmissible.

Tournon, Patriarch of Antioch, was sent to Peking, where at an audience of Kâng Hsi the Emperor demanded to be informed of the

decision of the Pope. When Kâng Hsi learnt that a Pope of Rome had ventured to give an opinion contrary to his own in a matter which was altogether Chinese, and in part purely linguistic, he was furious, and issued a decree declaring that the Jesuits should be protected, but the followers of Bishop Maigrot should be persecuted. The Patriarch Tournon was banished to Macao, where further difficulties arose between him and the bishop of that diocese, who went so far as to imprison the legate in a private house, where he died. A second legate was sent to Peking in 1715 in the person of one Mezzabarba. Kâng Hsi received him civilly, but would not talk about rites, and after six years fruitlessly spent he returned to Europe.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century it is claimed that there were in the provinces of the two Chiangs alone one hundred churches and a hundred thousand Christians. Those were the palmy days of missionary enterprise, but they did not last long. The quarrels of the missionaries amongst themselves, their

political ambitions, which it was represented constituted a danger to the state, disgusted Kâng Hsi. The Jesuits, indeed, he continued to tolerate, forbidding any priests but those who would follow the rules of Ricci to remain in China. In 1723 Kâng Hsi died, and was succeeded by his son Yung Chêng, who in the following year issued an edict strictly forbidding the propagation of the Christian religion. A few missionaries were retained at Peking on account of their scientific acquirements, but the majority were banished to the south. The native Christians in the north were left as a flock without shepherds; they were subjected to extortion and blackmailing of the worst description, and although many remained faithful and even contrived to harbour their teachers secretly, this edict of Yung Chêng gave the death-blow to an energy which had made itself powerfully felt for a century and a quarter.

I have been led further afield than I intended in this sketch of the Jesuit enterprise (based mainly upon Dr. Wells Williams's book

and on the *Biographie Universelle*), but it is a fascinating subject, and few people outside of those personally interested in China know how nearly at one time the Christian religion seemed to be reaching a great triumph. The story of Ricci, Schall, and Verbiest teaches one great truth. If missionaries are to be successful it must be by the power of masterly talent and knowledge. They can only work on any scale through the lettered class, and in order to dominate them must be able to give proof of superior attainments as the old Jesuits did. With courage, devotion, self-sacrifice, our missionaries are largely endowed. They have given proofs of these, even to the laying down of their lives; but these qualities are as nothing in the eyes of the cultivated Confucian. One such convert as Schall's friend Sü and his daughter Candida would do more towards Christianising China than thousands of poor peasants. To make such a convert needs qualifications which are rare indeed. Above all things an accurate and scholarly knowledge of the language is necessary. There have

been not a few excellent scholars among our missionaries. But there are many more whose ignorance in that respect has been fatal, covering themselves and the religion which they preach with ridicule. Fancy a Chinese Buddhist mounting on the roof of a hansom cab at Charing Cross and preaching Buddhism to the mob in pidgin English! That would give some measure of the effect produced on a Chinese crowd by a missionary whom I have seen perched upon a cart outside the great gate of the Tartar City at Peking, haranguing a yellow crowd of gapers in bastard Chinese, delivered with a strong Aberdonian accent. The Jesuits knew better than that.

Not an uncommon argument in support of the truths of Christianity is to call attention to the purity of the lives of the missionaries. I find a note of a conversation on this subject in my Journals. "Venerable sir," answered the learned and respectable Kung, "the goodness of a dumpling does not depend upon the pucker at the top of it. You can no more judge a man's merits by his outward seeming than you

can mete out the sea in a bushel measure. It is true that to all appearance your missionaries lead very pure lives; but to all appearance so do our people. Look at Mr. Li and Mr. Pao, who live in my street. Nothing can be more respectable than their outward demeanour, yet we know perfectly well that Mr. Li sleeps in flowers and closes his eyes in willows" (a metaphorical expression for leading a dissolute life), "while as for Mr. Pao, the less said about him the better. What guarantee have I that these men, whose excellence you extol, are not like my neighbours Li and Pao? Since I must doubt even that which passes before my eyes, how can I believe that which comes to me only by hearsay? The proverb says, 'If your front teeth are knocked out, swallow them.' Nobody publishes his own misfortune or his own disgrace."

The Chinaman knew his own country well. Virtue without the supremest power of science and education is not enough to carry conviction to the man of letters.

At any rate, the history of the great Jesuit

movement proves my point that the spirit of religious intolerance is not a fault which can fairly be laid to the charge of "The Hundred Names," as the οἱ πολλοί of China call themselves, and that where it has shown itself it has been engendered and fostered by the fears of the officials. It is the same with trade. The rulers and not the ruled are the authors of all difficulties. The Chinaman is a born trader. Buying, selling, and barter are the very joy of his life, and so long as he can get the better of a bargain what cares he with whom he deals? Foreigner or fellow-countryman, it is all one to him.

The third source to which hatred of foreigners is ascribed is opium. That has been dealt with so recently by a Royal Commission that there is nothing new to be said upon the subject. All I can say, speaking from personal observation, is that I have known some hundreds of Chinese of all classes who were opium smokers. None of them abused the drug. They regarded it as a most valuable prophylactic against fever and ague, and would

have been very loth to do without it. Some were literary men and officials doing hard brain-work; others, like a travelling pedlar whom I met on one of my Mongolian excursions, were doing equally hard bodily work. The abuse of opium has, so far as I can judge, been grossly exaggerated. It cannot be denied that there are to be seen in the opium dens of great cities a few poor wretches who have reduced themselves to a state of abject degradation by their intemperance; but their percentage must be small indeed compared to that of the victims of alcohol who are the disgrace of our own towns, and at any rate, as has been cunningly observed, they do not go home and beat their wives. To deprive the Chinaman of the finest qualities of Indian opium would be to condemn him to the use of the miserable substitute which he grows in his own fields. It would be like forbidding the importation of champagne and Château Lafitte into England, and driving our epicures and invalids to the necessity of falling back upon cheap and nasty stimulants. If the opium trade were to be abolished

to-morrow it is my firm conviction that it would spring up again immediately, but under altered conditions and in native hands. If it be thought that I am wrong in what I say as to the use of opium, read what Dr. Morrison says in his delightful book, *An Australian in China*. There you have the independent testimony of a competent physician who has travelled over the whole of China from east to west, and who has dealt exhaustively with the question. No one has had better opportunities of judging. No opinion is worthy of more respect.

My conclusion then is that neither the religion of the missionaries, nor the trade of the merchants, nor even the much-abused drug, can honestly be counted as the cause of the anti-foreign movement in China, though one and all have been used as levers to envenom it. Foreign intercourse in any shape is the bugbear of the mandarin, as being the one standing danger threatening abolition of himself and his privileges, of which the two most dearly prized are robbery and cruelty.

Let us be just, however, even to the mandarin. It often happens that the missionaries are surrounded by natives of bad character, who hang on to them for protection. Especially is this the case with certain Roman Catholics, who have always endeavoured to "extra-territorialise" their converts, that is, to exact for them the same privileges of immunity from Chinese jurisdiction as are granted to the subjects of their own country. It is easy to see how this may give just cause of offence to the officials, and how readily a cunning malefactor will run to his priest to shelter his back from the bamboo rod, swearing that the charge brought against him is a mere pretext, his profession of the Christian faith, in which he is protected by treaty, being the real offence. Full of righteous indignation and confidence in the truth of his convert, who, being a Christian, must necessarily be believed before his heathen accuser, the priest rushes off to the magistrate's office to plead the cause of his protégé. The magistrate finds the man guilty and punishes him; the priest is stout in his defence; a

diplomatic correspondence ensues, and on both sides the vials of wrath are poured out. How can a priest who interferes, and the mandarin who is interfered with, love one another? Some instances there have been where the priests have gone a step farther, and have actually urged their disciples to own no allegiance to their native authorities, but to obey only themselves as representatives of the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome.

The missionaries, on the other hand, of the China Inland Mission put forth no such pretensions, and excite no such animosities.

The jealousies of the different sects of Christianity among themselves throw as great difficulties in the way of conversion to-day as they did in Kâng Hsi's time. A highly-educated Chinese gentleman, who had been making inquiries into the doctrines of Christianity, once appealed to me on the subject. "How is it," he asked, "that if I go to one teacher and talk to him of what I have learnt from another he answers me, 'No, that is not right; that is the doctrine preached by So-and-

So; if you follow him you will go to hell'?" But that one missionary should speak of the Church of another Christian as a "Scarlet Woman" appeared to him to be altogether lacking in decorum. It must be a puzzle—yet not worse than the various schools of Buddhism.

It used to be a cardinal article of faith among Europeans in China during the fifties, that if once we could throw Peking open to foreign diplomacy all would be well. That was to be the sovereign cure for all the ills of which we had to complain. We should be in touch with the Emperor and his court, and we could not fail to convert the most recalcitrant of mandarins to the adoption of our Western civilisation: perhaps even China might become a Christian country. We have now been at Peking for forty years, during which time successive ministers of all countries have preached, flattered, scolded, and threatened over the sweetmeats and tea of the Tsung-Li Yamên, and what is the result to-day?

What really was wanted was not to get

into Peking ourselves, but to get the Emperor with his court and Government out of it. This is no new theory of mine. So confident have I always been that Peking is the worst capital on all grounds for China, that thirty years ago, writing in *Macmillan's Magazine* of the Tien-tsing massacre in 1870, I said, "This time we hope that the past will be a lesson for the future, and that such conditions will be imposed as will secure our countrymen, be they laymen or missionaries, from outrage, and will prevent China from remaining the one bar to the progress and civilisation of the world. It is not within the province of a magazine article to suggest what those conditions should be; but we cannot help hinting that if the treaty powers were to treat China as Peter the Great did Russia, and transplant the capital and court from Peking back to Nanking, whence it was removed by the Emperor Tai Tsung, who reigned under the style of Yung Lo at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the headquarters of obstructiveness and mandarinism would be destroyed, the power of the

viceroys would be brought under the control of the central Government, and a new era might be inaugurated which should be as conducive to the welfare and happiness of the Chinese people as to the safety and profits of the European trader. Above all, the representatives of European powers, instead of being boxed up in Peking like rats in a trap, would in the not improbable event of their having from time to time certain demands and requisitions to make of the Chinese Government, be backed up by the presence of their men of war on the spot. It is wonderful how distance weakens a threat, and how wholesomely the sight of power acts upon the Oriental mind."

Subsequent events have not led me to alter an opinion formed so many years ago. So long as Peking remains the capital so long will it be impossible to bring home to the Government certain facts which are well known to many of the provincial governors, but which only in rare instances they dare to report to headquarters. It is not conceivable that, if

the Empress Tsŭ Hsi had known what a hornet's nest she was stirring, she would have acted as she must have done in encouraging Prince Tuan and the Boxers. But it is a far cry to Peking.

It cannot be said that the policy of foreign governments in China has been calculated to raise the powers in the estimate of those very Chinese whom it ought to be our chief duty to impress. Take the outrages upon missionaries and the constant murders of which we have had to complain — until the German Emperor seized Kwei Chao we have always been content to accept a money indemnity as reparation; so that the local mandarins must have looked upon the death of a few missionaries—the most sweet-smelling offering that could be made to Tsŭ Hsi and her eunuchs —as a mere question of cost, and that moreover not to be defrayed by themselves, but squeezed out of the people. If some poor wretch or wretches were decapitated, the instigator, the real culprit, could enjoy the luxury of sitting in judgment over his own

crime, and sentencing to death some victim caught at random out of the prisons, or perhaps even—for Chinese methods are ingenious—paying off an old score.

As regards intercourse with the ruling classes, or obtaining any influence with the court, our presence at Peking has been useless—perhaps worse than useless, actually mischievous. For what can a Chinese gentleman think when he sees the filthiest beggar pass freely without let or hindrance in parts of the city where the presence of the minister of the proudest nation in Europe would be deemed a pollution? We have been tolerated in Peking as a necessary evil—accepted we have never been. The receptions at court have been so rare, and made such a great favour of, that they have been a mere farce, and in some cases, such as the visit of the ladies of the *Corps diplomatique* to the Empress Tsŭ Hsi, a degradation. Compare with the position of the British Minister at Peking —stoned and insulted in the streets, and unable to obtain protection or redress—the reception

of Li Hung Chang by all Europe three years ago. How that astute old intriguer must have laughed in his sleeve when he found himself petted, coaxed, and flattered, treated like a royal personage! and what must have been the inference drawn by every ignorant Chinese, from Tsŭ Hsi and the poor down-trampled Emperor Kwang Hsu down to the meanest beggar on the bridge? Crystal is not so clear as the fact that the Son of Heaven is the ruler of the world, and all other monarchs mere vassals, doing homage to the steps of the Jasper Throne.

Peking has exercised upon foreign representatives a sort of unholy glamour. They have been bewitched. Some have fallen down and worshipped before its scholastic and historical traditions; others have treated the great city and its rulers as a sort of gigantic "curio"; optimism has been the bane of all. If any serious attempt has been made to bring the mandarins into the pale of statesmanship it has been singularly unsuccessful. They remain as retrograde and as hopelessly obstructive as

ever. They have occasionally been clever enough, like Li, to throw dust in the eyes of foreigners, and that is all. Unless a radical change is effected European diplomacy will continue to be abortive; to effect that change it is absolutely necessary that the court should be removed from the headquarters of obstruction, and brought into actual contact with our civilisation and with the material evidence of Western power. The old-world prejudices of Moscow were a hindrance to Peter the Great; the Kugés buried for centuries at Kiyôto were a drag upon the reformers of Japan; the capitals were moved. These are the two great precedents for such a policy.

In spite of protesting princes and potentates, it seems as if the partition of China, that unwieldy monster, was at hand. When the phrases "Sphere of Influence" and "Hinterland," diplomatic expressions recently invented for the benefit of savage Africa, came, three or four years ago, to be applied to China, then nominally a friendly power, it was not difficult to foresee what must follow. The events of

the last three months have precipitated matters. Germany is in honour bound to exact exemplary retribution for the murder of her minister, the deadliest insult that could be offered to a great nation. If she were minded to take Shantung, where she might establish a flourishing colony, she would act as a buffer state between Central China and Russia, who has already to all intents possessed herself of Manchuria, and has for many a year cast longing eyes upon Chihli; and after all, if Russia were to annex Chihli with Peking would the world have any great cause for lamentation? Apart from all other considerations, Russia with a nucleus of co-religionists in the Albazines, of whom there is a short account at p. 211 of these letters, would have more in hand towards Christianising the people than any other nation or sect; and it seems to me that Peking Russian, and possibly Christian, would be far better than Peking Chinese, and certainly heathen. If further encroachment were guarded against by Germany in Shantung we should not be losers. Should France want

a rectification of frontier for her great Asiatic colony—why should we interfere? The restoration of the old frontier of Burmah and the freedom of the Yangtze region should suffice us.

As for a change of dynasty in China, which some writers are crying for, that is an impossibility, because there is no Chinese pretender ready to replace the Manchus. It would mean chaos such as the world has never seen.

Freed from the incubus of the Empress Tsŭ Hsi and her eunuchs, freed from Prince Tuan and the other bloodguilty Manchus, the Emperor, surrounded by a more enlightened court, and acting under capable advisers, would be enabled to rule peacefully and honestly over an immense and prosperous empire; while the removal of the capital would, without any act of vandalism, such as the suggested destruction of the Tombs, read China that lesson which is so sorely needed, and which the absurd reprisals of 1860 utterly failed to convey. After the second occupation of Peking we should not again hear of the Barbarians bringing tribute to the Son of Heaven from his vassals.

The idea of a change of capital is not one that is of itself strange or repugnant to the Chinese mind. It has even, apparently, been contemplated by the Dowager-Empress herself, though her choice would not unnaturally fall upon a spot like Hsi An Fu, near which town, at Hao, at Hsien Yang, and at Chang An, the emperors of the Chou dynasty (B.C. 1122-781), the Tsin (B.C. 249-200), and the Sui (A.D. 582-904) held their courts. But the chief charm of such a capital would be its inaccessibility and remoteness from the haunts of the foreign devil. Hsi An Fu would be Peking over again, and worse. It would give the *coup de grâce* to all hope of civilising the court.

In a letter published in the *Times* newspaper of June 22 I advocated once more the choice of Nanking as a new seat of Government, and I said that such a change would be hailed with joy by many millions of Chinese. A few days after that letter appeared my arguments received a very remarkable confirmation. A telegram from Yokohama informed us that the Chinese

community in Japan, a highly intelligent, educated, and respectable body of men, of first-rate business capacity, had presented a petition urging the foreign powers to take advantage of the settlement which must follow upon the present troubles, to insist upon the removal of the capital from Peking to Nanking. Now these men know what they are talking about. They know that such a change would work wonders in the direction of good government; that it would take the power out of the fossilised hands of the court; that the light of day would be fatal to the bats and owls of the forbidden city; that the secret societies would be deprived of their chief support; that the viceroys and the whole descending scale of mandarins, brought under control of an intelligible and intelligent Government, would no longer be able to squeeze and persecute the people, paralysing trade by their extortions and blackmailing, and setting up insuperable barriers to the progress of civilisation.

In the Blue Book published recently (July 30) we have the first instalment of the official

history of the tragedy of Peking—most melancholy reading, truly! But there is one bright spot in this miserable record. The attitude of our Foreign Office in all the negotiations which have taken place appears to have been altogether admirable. In spite of the cold water thrown by international jealousies upon Lord Salisbury's efforts to retrieve the situation, he has held his own position, and he has succeeded in using the best means which were available without in any way compromising the future. Japan is to furnish troops, but there are no vague promises, no encouragement of inordinate ambitions, and no raising of hopes, which, if realised, might be fraught with dangers beside which even the horrors of the last few weeks would be as child's play. Lord Salisbury boldly promises to find the money, and England will honour his bill. That is all. "Her Majesty's Government wish to draw a sharp distinction between immediate operations which may be still in time to save the Legations, and any ulterior operations which may be undertaken." No language could be clearer or more

satisfactory than this. Is it too much to hope that when the final settlement comes, the counsels of the same master-mind may devise a solution which shall bring about a happier era for China, without endangering the harmony of those nations which are now united in their resentment of outrages, for which the history of the world finds no parallel?

Besides the Blue Book, recent events have produced a plentiful crop of letters to the newspapers, many of them written with great ability and knowledge of Chinese affairs. The deposition of the undoubtedly guilty Empress, and the restoration to power of the Emperor, with a Government composed of the progressive party to which he is inclined, are with most of the writers a *sine qua non*. To this I say Amen. "The murderer Tuan must be executed" is a favourite cry. By all means; but we know what is the first postulate in the cooking of a hare. Prince Tuan will hardly be more easy to catch than was Nana Sahib in 1857. If the Emperor, a weakling at best, be left at Peking in a hotbed of harem intrigues

and secret societies, how can he be protected? Will his life be worth many days' purchase? Will a progressive ministry be able to exercise any authority over the great provincial satraps? The foreign representatives will be locked up in the old death-trap, and in ten, twenty, thirty years history will repeat itself. The inviolable sanctity of Legations with such surroundings becomes a most miserable farce.

The return to the *status quo ante*, with all its possibility of tragic repetitions, is just the sort of lame and impotent conclusion to which we have accustomed the Chinese, and in their dealings with us they count upon a moderation which, like all Asiatics, they construe into fear, and despise accordingly. A barren conquest like that of 1860, which left things as they were, is something which they cannot understand. When Li Hung Chang, who knows exactly what string it is best to harp upon, sweetly urges us to arouse "the gratitude of millions" by abstention from revenge, be sure his gentle mind sees its way to turn such magnanimity to good account. The horrors of

to-day were begotten of the mistakes of 1860 and 1870. Let us hope that 1900 may be the parent of a less ill-omened brood.

Those who desire to study the political problems of the Far East will find admirable instruction in Mr. Chirol's the *Far Eastern Question* (Macmillan), in Mr. Colquhoun's *Overland to China*, and in the same writer's more recently published *The Problem in China and British Policy*.

My best thanks are due to the proprietors of the *Times* newspaper for permission to reproduce here their admirable plan of Peking.

LETTER I

HONG-KONG, *23rd April* 1865.

LIFE at sea may be a very pleasant one for those who like it, but I doubt whether any one ever arrived at the end of a voyage of a month and a half by one of the P. and O. Co.'s steamers without uttering an expression of thanksgiving, hearty and sincere. The monotony of the ever-recurring daily occupations is killing. However,

> Be the day weary or be the day long,
> At length it ringeth to evensong,—

even Hong-kong is reached at last.

We rush up on deck after breakfast to see the first of the brown, sun-scorched island. It is shrouded in mist, however, and there is not much to look at. But every one is excited and flurried, and in the happiness of realising the

luxury of being on land, we feel kindly towards all mankind, and bid a cordial farewell to our fellow-passengers. In a short while we are in harbour, and the little colony, planted at the foot of wild and rugged hills matching those of the mainland opposite, lies before us. A crowd of boats plying for hire, and partly manned, to use a bull, by women often pulling away lustily with a baby slung across their backs, hail us with cries of "Wanchee boat?" "Wanchee big boat?" These Chinese boatwomen are real wonders. Hardy, strong, and burnt by the sun, they look and probably are as sturdy as any of the men. At any rate I saw one woman fight and thrash a couple of stalwart young boatmen; and a good stand-up fight it was, give and take. They did not spare her, and she belaboured them most lustily, screaming and chattering all the while in a way that would have frightened Billingsgate itself into silence. The boats seem to hold whole families,—even the nursery,—the small boys wearing corks or bottles to keep them afloat when they tumble overboard. The girls, being reckoned of no value, take their chance, and wear nothing to protect them. As soon

as we came to an anchor the boats of the great commercial firms came alongside, each probably steered by a partner eager to hear the latest news or to welcome a friend. One by one the passengers disappear, and he who has letters for one of the merchant princes of China may look forward to luxurious quarters and a warm welcome, for nowhere else is hospitality carried to such an extent as it is here.

The houses in Hong-kong are large and airy. Lofty and spacious rooms not overloaded with furniture (for everything is dispensed with an eye to the getting the most air and coolness) look out on to a broad verandah, which is shaded with green rush blinds to keep out the glare. Here bamboo lounging chairs, of indescribable comfort, hold out arms that invite one to doze away the sultry afternoon, or sit smoking a cheroot and sipping cool drinks in the most luxurious laziness. The clean and neat matting on the floors, the rare curiosities and jars which decorate the principal rooms, the quiet, mouse-like steps of the China boys in their blue dresses, who act as servants, coming in to take an order or deliver a message in their quaint pidgin English, give a

peculiar and original stamp to the whole, which is of itself immensely refreshing. Everything speaks of rest and quiet, and yet it is in these quiet, idle-seeming houses—very castles of Indolence they appear—that busy brains are at work, toiling all day, calculating rises and falls, watching chances by which thousands are won or lost in a day. In the old days when the opium trade was unlawful, and therefore at its height, when the rival houses had each their fast sailing clippers racing against one another from Bombay and Calcutta, and the first to arrive would lie hidden round the corner of the bay, and send a man on shore across the hills with the all-important intelligence, only showing itself when a price had been made, the life of a man of business at Hong-kong must have been one of untold excitement. Nowadays every man gets his letters by the mail, the opium trade is legitimatised, and there is no longer the same amount of "go" and dash about the thing. Still, a venture of tea to the tune of a million of dollars, upon which 40 or 50 per cent may be made or lost, must be exciting enough for most men. Just at present the China trade is in a singularly bad way; vast

sums have been lost in tea speculations; some of the larger houses have been very hard hit, but with plenty of capital at their backs have stood the shock well. Smaller firms, however, not having the same elasticity, have sunk under it; smashes and rumours of smashes are rife; and the only men who have not suffered are those who, with wise prescience, have folded their hands and done nothing, waiting for better times.

Hong-kong presents perhaps one of the oddest jumbles in the whole world. It is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring. The Government and principal people are English —the population are Chinese—the police are Indians — the language is bastard English mixed with Cantonese — the currency is the Mexican dollar, and the elements no more amalgamate than the oil and vinegar in a salad. The Europeans hate the Chinese, and the latter return the compliment with interest. In the streets Chinamen, Indian policemen, Malays, Parsees, and half-castes jostle up against Europeans, naval and military officers, Jack-tars, soldiers, and loafers of all denominations. Constantinople, Smyrna, and

Cairo show more picturesque and varied crowds, but nothing can be more grotesque than the street life of Hong-kong. The local cab is a green chair[1] open in front and covered in at the top, in which you may sit Yankeewise, with your feet sprawling above your head, and be carried along at a good pace by a couple of strong-shouldered coolies with shaven polls, long tails, and huge umbrella hats. Plenty of these are waiting for hire at every corner. They have a fixed tariff of ten cents the trip. The weights that these coolies carry slung on their bamboo-poles are something surprising. I have seen Turkish hamals bent nearly double under the most impossible loads, such as no London railway porter would look at; but it makes one's shoulders ache to see the Chinamen fetch and carry, for they do not hold the poles in their hands with the support of a shoulder-strap, like the chairmen who used to take old ladies out to tea and scandal in English country towns, but the bamboo poles are fastened at the ends, and the men simply hoist them on to their shoulders and stagger off under them. Both men and women of the lower orders are

[1] In those days the jinrikisha had not been invented.

certainly to our eyes mightily ill-favoured, and have villainous countenances which, if all tales be true, do not belie their characters; but now and then one comes across a pretty creature enough, some Cantonese, probably, as frail as fair—for St. Antony is not generally worshipped in seaside garrison towns. The long plaited tails worn by the men, and eked out with silk until they reach nearly to the heels, are a never-ending source of wonder to the new-comer. But there is one fashion of shaving the poll, leaving here and there a hair like the bristles on a gooseberry, which is peculiarly droll in its effect—a "coiffure à la groseille." The Chinaman is very careful of his tail, and no cat has a greater horror of wetting her coat than he has of a drop of rain falling on his back hair. To cut it off is the height of indignity; and when the Chinese sailors on board the P. and O. ships have been stealing opium from the cargo, which they find it very hard to keep their hands off, they are tied up by their tails to the capstan and summarily flogged; in which case they become useful as well as ornamental. The barber drives a brisk trade; nor does he confine himself to shaving, clipping, and plait-

ing; he has also cunning instruments with which he cleans the eyes and ears of his clients, the result of which is that the drums of their ears are often injured, and the poor patients afflicted with chronic deafness.

In this island of contrasts none is greater than that between the European and Chinese quarters of the town. In the former the houses are large and well built of gray slate-coloured bricks and fine granite, and others, some of which will be real palaces, are in course of construction. In the latter, on the contrary, the houses are low and mean. They are generally built with one story: on the ground floor is the shop with its various goods and quaint perpendicular inscriptions and advertisements; on the first floor, which is thrown out over the footway and supported by wooden posts, so as to form a covered walk, the family live, and here the ugly old women—uglier in China than anywhere—and queer little yellow children may be seen peering out of their dens at the passers-by. Towards evening, when the paper lanterns are lighted and the shops are shut up, not by doors and shutters as with us, but by a sort of cage of bamboo poles,

through which the interior is visible, the Chinese house looks very fantastic and strange. This quarter of the town bears a very bad name. It swarms with houses of the worst repute, and low grog-shops which are largely patronised by the sailors. The coolies in the street are a most ruffianly looking lot, not pleasant to meet in a by-road alone and unarmed. Indeed, life and property seem to be by no means so safe in the colony as they should be, considering the force which is kept here. A short time since a gentleman was attacked in broad daylight in the middle of the town, knocked down and robbed; and it is downright dangerous to venture on the hills alone without the moral influence of a revolver. The Chinamen are very clever thieves and housebreakers, and will even venture into barracks, smuggle themselves into the officers' quarters, burn a little opium under the nose of some sleeping hero, and in double-quick time clear the room of watch, chain, loose cash, and valuables. Sometimes, however, they get caught. The other night a young officer was too quick for one of these light-fingered gentlemen, and pinned him just as he was making off. A mighty pretty dress-

ing he got too—for when the officers were tired of thrashing him, with ingenious cruelty they turned him into the lock-up where the drunken soldiers were, and I leave you to guess what sort of a night he spent. It is said that a Hindoo will rob a man of the sheet he is sleeping on without disturbing him, but I think to clear the goods out of a large warehouse under the owner's nose, and with the police looking on, is at least as great a feat. This happened in this wise. A "godown" or storehouse full of valuable goods was fixed upon, a number of coolies walked in one fine day with a "comprador" (headman, bailiff, steward, and factotum), and with the utmost innocence set to work emptying the place, the pretended comprador all the while, in the most businesslike manner, making notes of the bales which were sent down to the quay and shipped off in small boats. One coolie is so like another that no wonder the policeman who was standing by thought it was all right, and the very audacity of the robbery put him off his guard. By the time the theft was discovered, goods, coolies, and comprador were well out of reach, and the owner was left lamenting over his empty godown.

It is rather hard on a man when he first comes to these parts to have to learn a new dialect of his own language more bizarre than broad Somersetshire, more unintelligible than that of Tennyson's northern farmer. This is the Cantonese or "pidgin" English. Pidgin means business, of which word it is not difficult to see that it is a corruption, and the jargon is the *patois* that has invented itself for transacting affairs with the natives. Use a plain English word to a Chinaman, and he will stare and "no sabé"; but distort it, add a syllable or two, put it in its wrong place, and, in short, make it so unlike itself that its own root would not acknowledge it, and he will catch your meaning at once. Several Chinese, Portuguese, and other words of doubtful pedigree, mixed up with this maltreated English, make up the lingo, which is a literal translation of Chinese syntax, and puzzling enough at first. Here is a specimen. I should tell you that in pidgin bull is *male*, cow *female*. An English gentleman from Shanghai went to call at a friend's house in Hong-kong. The door was opened by the head Chinese boy. "Mississee have got?" said the gentleman.

"Have got," answered the boy, "but just now no can see." "How fashion no can see?" The boy answered, grinning from ear to ear, "Last night have catchee one number one piecee bull chilo!" The lady of the house had been safely brought to bed during the night of a fine baby boy! Sometimes the boy will dot his I's and cross his T's with unfortunate distinctness as to the occupations in which his master or mistress is engaged, putting one in mind of Gavarni's *Enfants Terribles.* It is not to be wondered at that the coolies and servant boys should talk this lingo, but that clever, intelligent fellows like the compradors in big houses should not have acquired a better form of English is indeed strange.

Life at Hong-kong passes away pleasantly enough. The residents are very rich, and they spend their money like princes. Their hospitality is boundless, and open house is the rule. I can fancy no better quarters for a naval or military man. The climate is very different from what it used to be, and has become very healthy; but if a man should fall ill he can get away north to Peking, or run up to Japan, or choose between a dozen trips

nearer at hand. The usual daily routine here at this season of the year is as follows:—At six your boy wakes you with a cup of tea; you rise and bathe, and read or write till it is time to dress for breakfast at twelve (the merchants, of course, go to their offices at ten or even much earlier). Breakfast, as it is called, is a regular set meal with several courses, and champagne or claret; any one comes in who pleases, and is sure of a cordial welcome, and probably an invitation to return to dinner. After a cup of coffee and a cheroot, office work begins again, and goes on until about five, when every one turns out to ride, drive, or walk until seven, which is the hour for gossip, and sherry and bitters at the club, a first-rate establishment to which strangers are admitted as visitors, and where a man may put up if he pleases. Dinner is at eight, and a very serious affair it is, for Hong-kong is fond of good living and fine vintages; and this rule does not apply only to the heads of houses, for their clerks are lodged and boarded exactly on the same scale as themselves, and a boy who has been content to dine for a shilling at a London chop-house, sits down here to a dinner fit for a duke,

criticises the champagne and claret with the air of a connoisseur, and rattles in his pocket £300 or £400 a year for his *menus plaisirs*. Which shows the superiority of vulgar fractions to genteel Latin and Greek.

The rides and drives about Hong-kong are in their way very pretty, though the almost entire absence of trees presents a violent contrast to the rich tropical vegetation of Singapore and Penang. On the other hand, both on the mainland and in the island itself, there are bold, rugged mountain outlines, often shrouded in a mist that reminds one of Scotland and Ireland; huge boulders of rock from which beautiful ferns of every variety (fifty-two species have been classed) grow in profusion; a bay studded with wild barren islands; and to the east, where the colony is only separated from the mainland by about a mile of sea, the picturesque peninsula of Kowloon. The race-course in the Happy Valley is a lovely spot. It is surrounded by hills on three sides, and from the fourth, which is close to the bay, one looks up a blue glen such as Sir Walter Scott might have described. Here on the slope of the hill is the cemetery, and here and

at Government House there are some trees, among which the graceful bamboo is conspicuous. But it is the south-west of the island that is most affected by the residents. At a place called Pok Fo Lum, about four miles off, several of the rich merchants have built bungalows to which in summer-time, after stewing all day in their offices, it is their wont to resort of an afternoon, and let the fresh sea-breeze clear their brains of tea, opium, silk, rises and falls, and such-like cobwebs. On a fine evening these gardens are a very pleasant lounge. At the back rises the Peak, a fine bold rock some 1700 feet high; all around are sweet-scented tropical flowers teeming with strange, many-coloured insects and gorgeous butterflies; while in front the view stretches to the mainland hills across the brilliant sea rippling against little islands, and covered with flotillas of native boats, peaceful enough to all appearance, but ever ready for any little piece of light piracy that may turn up.

I was very anxious before leaving the south of China to see Canton, and accordingly on the 28th April I started with a friend in one of the huge house-steamers that ply between

Hong-kong and Canton, and are of themselves curiosities. They are divided into separate parts for Europeans, Parsees, and natives of the poorer class, with loose boxes into which bettermost Chinese families are put. You may form some idea of their size when I tell you that three weeks ago, on the occasion of a festival, our boat the *Kin Shan* took up 2063 Chinamen to Canton, whither they were bound to "chin-chin" the graves of their ancestors. In all American steamers—and this is a Yankee venture—speed is the great object, and we accomplished the distance, between 80 and 90 miles, under the six hours.

We had a bright sunny morning for our expedition, and the harbour of Hong-kong appeared to great advantage, for there were plenty of fleecy clouds in the sky throwing fantastic shadows over the hills around. The sea was as calm and transparent as a lake, and we could sit in the best cabin, which is a huge building on the forecastle, catching every breath of air, and enjoying the scenery. The river-banks are at first wild, barren, and hilly, like Hong-kong, but higher up there begin to be signs of cultivation. Plantains

and rice, which is the greenest of all green grasses, grow in profusion among the snipe marshes. Bamboos spring up close to the water's edge, and the hills are lower, less savage-looking, and more fruitful. Ruined forts, destroyed when we forced our trade upon the unwilling Chinese, numberless boats and junks, here and there a pagoda with different sorts of plants peeping out of its many stories, tell us that we are drawing near a town, and after about four hours and a half we reach Wampoa, a miserable place, with about as dirty and degraded-looking a population as could be seen anywhere. A few lime kilns, soy or ketchup factories, and dry docks where ships are brought to have their keels cleaned of barnacles and sea-muck, seem to constitute all the business of the place. I shall always henceforth look upon soy as the essence of the dirt of Wampoa.

Canton itself does not present a very clean face to be washed by the unsavoury river. If any one should come here expecting to see a fine city of quays and palaces, he will be grievously disappointed. Myriads of low dirty wooden houses, built almost in the very water

itself, are crowded together higgledy piggledy, without order or method. As if these were not enough, there are whole streets, alleys, and quarters of the foulest boat-houses, all swarming with human, and probably other, life. Junks in numbers, carrying guns for defence, and if a safe opportunity occurs, for offence, are moored in the stream. Strange, grotesque craft they are, with their huge bows built to represent the heads of sea-monsters; a great eye is painted on each side, for the Chinese treat their ships as reasoning beings, and say, "S'pose no got eye, no can see; s'pose no can see, no can walkee," which is unanswerable — even the *Kin Shan* carries an eye on each paddle-box in deference to this idea. But as at Hong-kong, the chief peculiarity of the river scene here is the crowd of small boats with female crews. The mother pulls the stroke oar, the aunt the bow, and grandmamma is at the helm with a third. I am sure there must have been several hundreds of these yellow ladies round the steamer at one time. The parrot-house at the Zoological Gardens was silence itself by comparison, for hard work, and strong pulling, have given them lungs of leather. They all claim acquaintance,

and employment on the strength of it. "My boatee, my boatee, my no see you Cheena side long tim." We had our own boat, however, and with patience cleared a way and got to shore. But no description of the Canton River would be complete without an allusion to the famous "flower-boats." Huge, unwieldy barges they are, moored by the river-side, and tricked out with every paltry decoration of cheap gilding, paper lanterns, and bizarre ornament that the Owen Jones of China can invent. These are the temples of Venus. The priestesses are mostly brown ugly little women in sad-coloured garments, upon whose flat yellow faces the rosy paint looks even more ghastly than on Europeans; some are almost pretty, however, and all have beautiful hands and feet (when the latter have not been wantonly deformed), indeed this is the one gift of beauty common to all the Chinese, and the very men-servants who wait upon one have hands kept delicately clean, and so well formed that many an European lady might envy them; they have no need to wrap a napkin round their thumbs, nor to wear white cotton gloves; their taper fingers and filbert nails are pleasant to look upon. At night,

when the lanterns are lighted, and the tawdriness of the decorations is less offensive, the flower-boats look gay enough, and they are one of the sights of Canton. The trade that their denizens ply is not looked upon as disgraceful, nor does it prevent their marrying respectably afterwards,—at least so it is said.

We had had an empty house placed at our disposal, and we took with us a servant, a coolie, and a native cook. And this brings me to the record of a feat. When we arrived at our house we found that the boy in charge (a "boy," like the boy in Oliver Twist, may be a very old man) had gone off to "chin-chin" his ancestors' graves, a ceremony which, although our coming had been announced to him, could on no account be deferred. So there we were at half-past three, without so much as a scrap of fuel or a grid-iron to put upon it. In spite of this we sat down, four of us, at eight o'clock, to a dinner of mulligatawny soup, soles, for which the river is famous, three *entrées*, a buffalo's hump, like boiled beef idealised, snipes, curried prawns, and a dessert of plantains, oranges, rose apples, tasting just like rose leaves, and dried lychees, the whole being decked out in the most excellent

taste, with a profusion of the sweetest scented and most brilliant flowers. We had our wine with us, and altogether I never sat down to a better dinner. Could any English servants, arriving at an empty house in London, have done the same? The Chinese, when they have learnt to cook after our fashion, are the best *chefs* in the world. You see the art requires delicacy of hand, plenty of imagination, and does not involve a knowledge of perspective, so it just suits their talents.

I am afraid I can give you but a poor description of Canton; the inventory is too large to be taken in a letter. Mr. Sala or any of the professed literary appraisers would find matter for at least a chapter in the bad smells. The streets are very narrow. Three men might walk abreast in them, and perhaps you might throw in a boy if he was very tiny indeed. On each side are small, low shops, which throw out such a multitude of lanterns and perpendicular notices, like the attenuated ghosts of many-coloured banners, that they look as if a solemn procession in a pantomime had been changed by a tap of the harlequin's wand into a scene of streets and advertise-

ments. As if the gangway were not narrow enough, hucksters and costermongers, offering every kind of goods for sale, hold their stalls on each available square foot of pavement. There are meat stalls, fruit stalls, sweetmeat stalls, sugar-cane stalls, fish stalls, and what can only be designated as offal stalls. The yellowest crowd in the world hustles along pell-mell at a furious rate, for every one is busy and every one is in a hurry. Coolies carrying every conceivable burden balance-wise, from a load of timber to a bundle of leeks, rush at one, and it needs a sharp look-out to steer clear of their bamboo poles. Round the corner, lolling in his chair, for all the world like one of those "magots" Frenchwomen are so fond of, a Chinese dignitary is borne along, attended by five or six policemen in white caps and red tassels, nearly upsetting a small-footed lady, who has just time to totter out of the way on her rickety legs. If there is a clear space, you may be sure there is a doctor or fortune-teller peering into his patient's mouth, like a groom examining a horse's teeth, or tapping his head mysteriously with a fan, to the wonder of a small gaping circle. Barring in very rare instances

a dog or two—for the wary little beasts seem to know the danger that they run of being turned into butchers' meat if they stray out of their own domain—no animals are to be seen. Beasts of burden are represented by the men, and beasts of draught there are none; indeed, no carriage, cart, or costermonger's barrow could thread its way here. The amount of industry to be seen in a single street is something surprising. Carpenters, cobblers, turners, carvers—artisans, in short, of all guilds, are toiling away for dear life — no one is idle. The butcher is busy separating the coarser from the finer parts of the meat; the fishmonger gutting his fish, and setting the entrails carefully on one side—there is no part too vile or mean, none too dear and delicate to find a customer. Chow-chow dogs (I saw such a pretty little puppy being carried off to execution; he looked like a brown spitz, and I felt inclined to buy his release), birds' nests, rice-birds, the beccafichi of China, and all manner of delicacies, are cheek-by-jowl with equally numerous abominations, not to speak of rats and "such small deer." The greengrocers' are the most tempting of the provision shops; they at least show

nothing offensive, and they make their fruit look to the greatest advantage, setting oranges, apples, lychees, and vegetables in curious patterns, while ropes of bananas, leeks, young lettuces, and other greens hang from the ceiling. Competition is great, and with the utmost labour it is hard to earn a living, for the two cities, Tartar and Chinese, with their suburbs, hold an immense population, not to speak of the thousands who are born, live, and die in the boats, and have no part or share in the land until they come in for that property six feet by three, which is the common inheritance. Altogether, taking both sides of the river, there are probably a million and a half of inhabitants, of whom not more than one hundred are Europeans.

Until the return of the English to Canton, it used to be a point of honour with the Chinese at Hong-kong to try and persuade people that the bombardment of 1856 had not done much damage. If they were asked whether Yeh's Palace or Yamên had been injured they would answer, "Not too muchee; my hab hear they breakee that cup that saucer; that alloo." But the fact is that the city still bears the marks of

the punishment it received; considerable spaces have been laid waste by fire; Yeh's Yamên has been razed to the ground and its site "annexed" by the French, who are building a cathedral and Jesuit college upon it. Notwithstanding the havoc made by shot and shell, however, there is much to be seen. The Yamêns of the Viceroy, the Governor, and other high functionaries are standing. I only saw the outsides of these palaces. They are all pretty much alike. An arched gateway, with a colossal warrior painted in fresco on either side, faces a blank wall, on which is drawn the outline of some fabulous monster, and this appears to be used for notices and announcements; marble kylins and grotesque beasts adorn the courtyard, which is crowded with functionaries and dependants. The roofs are fretted into a thousand quaint designs; but you are as familiar with their style as I am, and as I shall probably in some future letter have an opportunity of saying something about the interior of a Chinese officer's palace, I had better let the subject alone now.

Of course we went to see the "Temple of Punishments" and that of the Five Hundred

Saints, which last is one of the celebrities of China. The former is so called from its containing models of all the various modes which Chinese ingenuity has invented for torturing malefactors. Guarding the portals are two colossal "josses" or idols, represented with vermilion faces and a prodigious corpulency. Bits of paper, as votive offerings, some with inscriptions, but more without, are pinned or fastened to them by the pious: this is a Chinese method of showing respect to the graves of their dead, and to their gods. Inside the gate is a large courtyard, which we found crowded with people; all around were little tables at which sat fortune-tellers, some young men, others veterans with scanty beards and enormous tortoise-shell spectacles, writing as solemnly as judges. Here in bamboo divisions are the dolls which give the temple its name, and very horrible are the scenes which they represent; beyond the courtyard is the real joss-house, from which I carried away a confused idea of tinsel, artificial flowers, scraps of paper, and gloom.

Far more interesting was the Temple of the Five Hundred Saints. In the gateway, as in

the former case, two josses of stupendous size mount guard. One is represented as solacing himself with a tune on a kind of mandoline; and I noticed that many of the scraps of paper with which he has been "chin-chinned" were cut in the shape of his favourite instrument. Without let or hindrance we wandered through a maze of white-washed and neatly-kept cloisters, until we came to the refectory (for there is a monastery attached to this temple), where we found the monks at their afternoon meal. Just as we arrived, a tiny musical-toned bell was sounded, at which signal the brethren rose, and what appeared to be a short prayer or grace was recited in chorus, after which a monk of higher rank, preceded by an attendant, left the hall, which was a square room with long tables, and fenced off from the cloisters at one end by a low bamboo railing. As soon as the great man was gone the others fell to at their chopsticks and small bowls with renewed vigour. The monks wear a long light gray robe, and they shave the whole head, but in other respects their dress does not differ from that of laymen. The temple itself is a large hall in which the five hundred, placed

in alleys at right angles, sit facing one another in all their majesty. They are all of gilt metal or wood, and under life size, if one may use such a term with regard to idols. They are represented in every variety of attitude, occupation, and expression. Some are playing on musical instruments, and are bland; others are evidently preaching, and are didactic; others are inflicting punishment or doing battle, and are very fierce; one is performing a difficult act of horsemanship on a large kylin, while two smaller kylins are looking on in admiration—one and all are made to look fat and comfortable, with huge paunches. Before each is placed a small green porcelain pot filled with the ashes of the joss-sticks which have been burnt in his honour. The monks were uniformly civil to us, and neither here nor in the Temple of Horrors was any fee asked or expected; how much better it would be if Europeans would follow the example of these heathens, and not ask admission fees in their cathedrals and churches.

You may well imagine that during a first visit to a great Chinese city everything appeared strange and marvellous, but the greatest

wonder of all was that we should be able to wander hither and thither, intruding into temples, thrusting our curious noses into every hole and corner, like ferrets in a rabbit warren, elbowing our way unmolested through crowds that a very few years ago would have mobbed and brick-batted at least, and perhaps tortured and murdered by inches, any European that ventured outside the factories. It seems almost a fatality that now that the city is safe, and its inhabitants peacefully inclined, the opening of the Yang-Tse-Chiang should have turned the European traffic with the interior, of which Canton was formerly the headquarters, into a new channel. The prosperity of Canton is evident, and very striking. But it is a native and self-containing prosperity, and in no ways dependent on Europe, and shows that the Chinese were quite right when they asserted that they could do very well without us. Just before the principal English firms withdrew their representatives from the city, finding that the little business there was to do could be more cheaply transacted by agents drawing a small percentage, an arrangement was made with the local government whereby we became the lessees of

a small mud island, which had to be filled in at a great cost, called Shah-Meen. This was to become the English quarter. The church and new consular buildings have been erected there, and there are a few empty bungalows belonging to merchants, but the place does not seem likely ever to wear a look of great importance; the merchants see no likelihood of an inducement to return, so Shah-Meen has so far been a poor bargain.

Not far from Shah-Meen are the pleasure-gardens of a merchant named Po-Ting-Qua. Terraces, summer-houses, stairs, drawbridges, carp-ponds, rock-work, and flowers are thrown together most fantastically, exactly like the gardens that the ladies and gentlemen on tea-cups and plates walk about in. The doors are cut out of the walls in quaint shapes, such as circles, jars, bottles, etc. As the rainy season has set in the garden was not looking its best, but it was very pretty nevertheless, although there was a little too much stagnant water about for our ideas. Lord Bacon in his essay on gardens says: "For fountains they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all and make the garden unwholesome, and full

of flies and frogs." If this is true in England, how much more does it apply to the East. Such things as flower-beds are unknown here. The plants grow anyhow, without order or arrangement, but they are carefully tended, and indeed the whole place was beautifully kept, and there seemed to be a large staff of gardeners and carpenters, who play a conspicuous part in a Chinese garden.

You will be wanting to hear about the curiosity shops. I went to see them, but found nothing but rubbish at outrageous prices. The Chinese buy up everything good at any price. The dealers carry round their best things to the native connoisseurs, and put off any trash upon chance customers, swearing that everything is "oloo and culew," old and curious. I bought one small bottle for a few shillings as a souvenir of Canton, but even if I had had heaps of money, there was no temptation to spend it. I found an old friend at Canton in the person of Mr. R., our consul, who was a most amiable cicerone. He has passed the chief part of his life in China, and is a great authority upon all matters connected with our relations with the Chinese. He lives in a

fascinatingly picturesque Yamên with quite an extensive garden—a curiosity in itself,—we spent most of the day together and met for dinner, either at my quarters or in his beautiful Aladdin's palace, every evening.

We returned to Hong-kong on May Day. I found that the P. and O. Co. had put on an extra steamer, to start on Thursday the 4th, so I determined not to wait for the mail, but to start for Shanghai without delay. This prevents me from making a trip to Macao, which is par excellence *the* "outing" from Hong-kong. But as the rainy season has begun in earnest, perhaps I do not lose much—at any rate, I shall leave my Hong-kong friends with the utmost regret; their kindness and hospitality have known no bounds.

LETTER II

SHANGHAI, 10*th May* 1865.

THE *Ganges* did not leave Hong-kong until the 5th at noon, and we anchored off the light-ship in the estuary here on Monday night, but the river is so difficult of navigation that we could not run into Shanghai until the next morning. We had on the whole a fine passage and a very quick one; C. and R., who were my companions at Canton, came on with me, and the captain of the ship being a very well-read, gentlemanlike man, sparing no pains to make every one comfortable, we had a very cheery voyage. We had besides a young French artillery officer on his way to revisit the scene of the campaign he had made in 1860, a few nondescripts, two or three Chinese families, and a Parsee. Of course the Chinamen pigged together separately, and his "odium theologicum" forbade the Parsee

to eat with us, which was a benefit to all parties, for he was not a desirable companion by any means. The point of dirt at which the Chinese passengers contrived to arrive during the voyage, and the whiffs which came from their cabins when the doors were opened, surpass belief; one of their great gentlemen here stood over the French officer and myself as we were playing backgammon one day, and manifested the utmost interest in the game, uttering exclamations at every lucky throw, for the Chinese are gamblers to the backbone,—but so noisome was he that we had to leave off playing and rush on deck for fresh air. This being the condition of a "gentleman," fancy how pleasant the 110 coolie passengers under the forecastle were to sight and smell. The Chinese ladies did not show at all, but they used to send their dirty little brats up on deck to play, and very offensive they contrived to make their small selves. Independently of their dirt, Chinamen are a sorry spectacle on a journey—their heads require shaving (a week's crop looks even worse on the poll than on the chin), and their tails get untidy and shaggy from being slept upon. Talking of tails, it seems to be

the "chic" at Shanghai to lengthen them with white instead of black silk, which does not look near so well. I noticed one man who, like little Cock Robin, had "tied up his tail with a yard of blue bobbin." (I found out afterwards that these white and blue tails are signs of mourning.)

The voyage from Hong-kong to the north, being principally a coasting affair, is not so dull and uneventful as more sea-going cruises. We were constantly in sight of land—numberless headlands and islands mark the course, but render it dangerous in bad weather. There are plenty of ships to be seen, and all around the rocky islands the sea is alive with fishing-smacks, their crews busily at work. We had no mails on board, nor stern officers in charge, so the captain stopped once and bought a quantity of fresh fish, delicious pomfret all alive and kicking, paying the fishermen in kind with ship's biscuit, which I hope was as great a boon to them as their fish was to us. It is such a fine sight in one of these narrow island passages, where one can almost hear the sea dashing against the basaltic rocks on either side, to pass a great sailing-ship close on our

lee, and steam away from her at top speed. Long before the estuary is reached, the sea, which in these parts is of a deep aquamarine green, becomes clouded and discoloured. This is owing to the immense volume of yellow dirty water which the Yang-tse-kiang pours down. It is much the same colour as the Rhine, and quite as foul-looking.

We began ascending the river soon after daybreak on Tuesday morning. Its banks are low and flat. If it were not for a few trees there would be nothing to relieve the eye from the monotony of the filthy water and vast plain. Here and there a group of European houses and an ensign or two mark a settlement. By eleven o'clock we had threaded our way through the labyrinth of shipping and had reached Shanghai. I landed at once and heard of an opportunity for Tientsing on Friday next, of which I shall avail myself. By the way, I must tell you here, that so far as I can learn, the communications between Tientsing and this place are somewhat uncertain, so if any mail should not carry a letter to you from me, do not pay me the compliment of being uneasy, but let no news be good news.

My good quarters and the kind hospitality which I had met with at Hong-kong seem to follow me on my travels. Here again I have been received with the warmest welcome by Mr. D., a junior partner of C.'s, and I am assured of the same at Tientsing. If all the travellers and officers stationed in China, whom I have met, did not tell me that this hospitality is the universal rule, I should be almost shy of accepting so much kindness.

I have little enough to tell you about Shanghai. The city is ugly and unattractive, the river dingy, and the country a dead level plain. From the top of the club-house the view in every direction is utterly unbroken, there is not a mound the height of dear old Salt Hill. Then, commercially speaking, the town at the time of my visit was a blank. The crisis of which I have spoken to you before has told here more than elsewhere; to my eye the harbour seems full enough of shipping, but I am told that there are not more than a third of the vessels that used to be seen in former years. One of the causes which has brought about this effect has

been the speculation in land. When the rebellion panic was upon the Chinese they were only too glad to flock into the settlement for shelter; land rose in value, and was bought up in every direction. Now that the revolt has been put down in this part of the empire the natives have gone home to their own abodes, and of course landed property has fallen, so that those speculators who did not sell in time have their money hopelessly tied up. This, and the competition system practised by the Europeans in contrast to the Chinese, who do everything by combination, together with "hard times," have brought Shanghai very low. In short, morally as well as physically, it is, for the present, flat.

I have had a good deal of conversation with Sir Harry Parkes, our consul here. You will recollect him as famous for the pluck he showed when he and Loch were taken prisoners in Peking; he is one of the great authorities in China, and one of our ablest officers in the East. He tells me that he considers the state of feeling between the Chinese and Europeans in this part as on the whole satisfactory; that the natives have begun to accept us and our

trade as a necessity; to use his own expression, it is a sort of husband and wife arrangement, with slight incompatibilities of temper on both sides. Sir Harry Parkes is a man of extraordinary determination and energy; his knowledge of the Chinese language, customs, and character have given him an immense influence over the natives. He is in every way a remarkable man, and great things are expected of him, even by those who differ from him in opinion. It is only fair to say, that there are many men of judgment and experience out here who do not agree with him in holding that our trade with China stands on a solid footing. They consider that the unwilling spirit with which the natives first received us has by no means died out, and that little by little, always by fair means and without violence,[1] for they know our strength, the Chinese will endeavour to oust us from our position, and return to their traditional conservatism. Perhaps this is a pessimist creed, but still it is largely professed.

[1] This, be it remembered, was written in 1865, and was the most desponding view taken at that time even by those who were the gloomiest prophets.

At any rate the Chinese will find it a hard matter to get rid of us, for no Government will give up a matter of nearly six millions of revenue without a struggle. For the present the British are welcome here. The Tâi Pîngs have been driven out of this part of China, and the rebellion has dwindled down to comparative unimportance. The Chinese may be given credit for so much of gratitude as looks upon past benefits as earnests of future favours. We can still be useful, so we are still courted. It remains to be seen whether, when we shall have played our part out, our friends will try to cast us on one side.

When Sir Rutherford Alcock was in authority here he established a municipal system which so long as Shanghai was prosperous answered very well; of course, however, this being Chinese territory, subscription to the authority of the municipality could not be compulsory, nor were its enactments binding; but it suited the interests of the public to accept it, and so it was supported by all the respectable part of the community. Now the failures have told upon this as upon every other institution, and unless better times come,

it will fall to the ground for want of funds and strength. It would be a great pity that this should be the case, for there are many improvements needed here; above all, gas-lighting. It is really to be hoped that things will take a better turn soon, for they seem to be quite at their worst.

I must tell you of rather a funny offer of service that I received the other day. R.'s Chinese boy came into me, and after playing nervously with his tail for a little while, said, "My massa talkee my too muchee fooloo; my thinkee more better my walkee Peking side long you." I felt half-inclined to engage the man for his simplicity, especially as he is a good servant, though certainly not over bright.

11th May.

I have just been to see my berth on board the *Yuen-tse-Fee*, a private steamer. She is to stop at Chihfu. I have a cabin to myself, a piece of good luck which I have enjoyed ever since Galle. In about a week hence I expect to be at Peking. We sail at three in the morning to-morrow, so I must go on board

this evening. The *Yuen-tse-Fee* is a very tiny craft; nothing big can get up the Peiho, so if it blows at all shan't we just pitch about!

We are expecting the mail in hourly, but I hope to reach Peking before it.

LETTER III

Ship *Yuen-tse-Fee*,
In the Gulf of Pechili,
15th May 1865.

I DARESAY you will understand that I was rather melancholy at leaving Shanghai. For the first time on all this long journey I was to set out alone, and my hosts, although they were only recent acquaintances, had been so kind to me that I felt as if I were leaving old friends. I took leave of them at half-past eleven on Thursday night, 11th May, for as the ship was to sail at three in the morning I had to sleep on board. The harbour was dark and gloomy, and it was as much as I could do to steer the six-oared gig by the dim light of the lanterns at the various masts' heads. In short, everything looked black and dismal, and I felt very much like going back to school after the holidays; but it don't do to give in,

and very soon after I got on board I was sleeping as sound as the rats in my cabin and bed, and an army of mosquitoes which had flocked on board, would let me. When I woke next morning we were hard and fast aground in the estuary; a thick fog had come on in the night, and the captain, missing his course, had run upon one of the many treacherous shoals of the great river. The tide took us off again at about eleven, and we went on without further accident.

I had one fellow-passenger, an officer of the purveyor's department of the army, on his road to Peking to seek employment under the Imperial Government.

We had a strong head wind against us at first and very dirty weather on Friday night. But in spite of wind and weather the little *Yuen-tse-Fee* justified her name, which a Chinaman interpreted for me as "walkee all the same Fly," and she kept up a good average of eight knots and a half.

On Sunday morning we were off the Shantung promontory, a fine broad headland with a rough, jagged outline. Notwithstanding the haziness of the atmosphere we had a good

view of the coast and of the Rocky Islands which make this sea so dangerous. Passing Cape Cod, we left to the westward the spot where the unlucky *Race Horse* was lost, and arrived at Chihfu at about five o'clock the same evening.

For a town which really has some little commercial importance, Chihfu is certainly one of the most wretched dens I ever saw. It consists of one long narrow street of untidy stone and brick houses, the peculiarity of which is that they have no apparent front or back, so that it is a mystery how the inhabitants get into or out of them. Two or three European houses, the office of the Chinese officer of Customs, a few godowns more or less empty, and here and there a hovel built up of mud, sea-weed, and bamboo matting, complete the town. Its only ornaments are the flags of the consul and of the Chinese officer. It is prettily situated at the foot of a range of low, but picturesquely tossed-about hills, and the harbour with its fleet of junks and ships looks very well from the town. The type of the inhabitants is different from that of the southern Chinese, the Tartar features are very prominent among them,

and it seemed to me that they were stronger and finer men. I certainly never saw a better boat's crew than the six men who rowed me on shore. Whether they would have the pluck to "stay" against an English crew I cannot say, but their short spurt was admirable.

In spite of its mean appearance there is sufficient trade carried on at Chihfu to induce some seventy Europeans to reside there. It is, moreover, likely to become popular as a sea-bathing resort and sanatorium.

In former days it was a great port for the junks, and there are still many of them running there; but the junk trade has been very much knocked on the head by foreign ships and steamers, which the Chinese see the advantage of chartering, although they continue to build their own clumsy and unwieldy craft. The principal exports of Chihfu are peas and bean cake, and a little manufactured silk; there is besides a small import trade of shirtings and opium.

17th May.

The best part of Monday was occupied in discharging our cargo, and we did not get up

steam until five o'clock. A strong wind had sprung up from the north-west, and the harbour, which is very much exposed on that side, gave signs and tokens which led us to expect a very squally night outside; however, the wind dropped suddenly and gave place to a thick fog, so we escaped being tossed about, at the expense of a few alarms of running on to the rocks; which is not at all a pleasant look-out, for even if our lives would not have been in actual danger, there was the certainty that if we had struck a rock we should have lost all our baggage, and passed a very uncomfortable night. We took up another passenger at Chihfu, an interpreter, bound for Tientsing—apparently a very popular gentleman, for the captain had to turn out neck and crop a company of friends who had come to see him off, and who were inclined to prolong that ceremony, which involves much sherry and brandy drinking, until long past the hour fixed for our departure.

On Tuesday morning we took up our pilot for the Peiho River. He reported having come across a junk wrecked and without masts —all hands had evidently been lost; and on

fishing about the cabin with a boat-hook in order to get the papers if possible, he found two or three dead bodies in a fearful state of decomposition. It is supposed that she must have been wrecked more than a month ago.

We are absolutely suffering from cold here. The thermometer is 55° in my cabin—a serious contrast after the 90° and 95° I have been accustomed to. My warmer clothes are in the hold, so I am forced to wear a greatcoat. We expect to find it warmer at Tientsing.

It was late in the afternoon on Tuesday when we arrived at the entrance of the River Peiho.

Here are the famous Taku Forts, the scene of the disaster of 1859, when Sir Frederick Bruce went up to get the treaty ratified, and our vessels were beaten back with the loss of two gunboats, which were sunk. The two forts stand on either side of the mouth of the river, and are occupied—that on the north by the French, and that on the south by the English. A company of infantry suffices to garrison each. They are about to be evacuated. A little to the east of the British Fort there still lies one of our sunken gunboats; the

Chinese have recovered and appropriated her guns. I cannot conceive a more dismal lot than that of garrisoning Taku. Besides the forts, which in themselves are dreary enough, there are but a few Chinese mud huts and an hotel, principally patronised by pilots; and the French are cut off even from these by the Peiho, than which no more filthy little stream ever defiled a sea. Its banks at the mouth are vast plains of mud, lying flush with the water, and so bleak and sad-looking that one almost wonders that the very wild-fowl should be induced to stop there. Mud forts, mud houses, mud fields, and muddy river—everything is mud.

Higher up stream, although the banks are very flat and uninteresting, there is no lack of verdure. The trees are insignificant, but there are green fields and gardens cultivated with vegetables and fruit-trees. The neighbourhood of Tientsing is said to be the garden of China, and in the season a peach only fetches three cash, of which one thousand or more, according to the exchange, go to make up the dollar.

We soon had an experience of the difficulty of navigating the Peiho, which is no broader

than the Thames at Eton, and as tortuous as Cuckoo weir. Over and over again we were on the point of running aground, and when on one occasion we did stick, it was a labour of great difficulty to get off again. A boat's crew had to be landed, and a line fastened to a stout tree on the bank, by which means and by backing with all our force we floated off, the sailors on shore improving the occasion by stealing onions and vegetables from the gardens on the bank. Nor was the shallowness of the water our only impediment, for we did not reach Tientsing without several brushes and collisions with junks, in one of which our screw was broken.

I found Tientsing in a great state of excitement. It was the last day of the races, and to my great joy I found my colleague Saurin staying at the Russian consulate. Of course we agreed to make the journey to Peking together, and the Russian consul, by way of making things pleasant, most kindly volunteered to put me up.

The races really showed some very good sport. Tientsing cannot boast of such a meeting as those of Hong-kong and Shanghai,

where English thoroughbreds are run, and for which such horses as "Buckstone," since dead, and "Sir William" are imported; the horses are but Mongol ponies, the *bona fide* hacks of their owners and riders, yet they accomplished the three-mile race in seven minutes and forty seconds. They are very plucky, strong little beasts, and run till they drop. The races were an additional stroke of luck for me, for I was able at the end of the day to buy a capital pony for fifty dollars. The Chinese crowd showed the greatest possible interest in all the proceedings, and the course had to be kept *vi et flagellis*, which latter were not spared by the native police. Perhaps they feared spoiling the Chinaman, who is proverbially a child.

19th May.

I must own that I was agreeably disappointed in Tientsing. So many travellers have abused it, and inveighed against its filth and its beggarly crowd, that I expected to be shocked in one or other of my senses at every step. It certainly is very dirty, but not much more so than other Chinese towns, or, for that matter, than many in Europe; and who that has travelled in the

sunny South has not seen rags and tatters, vermin, foul diseases, and deformities paraded as stimulants to charity? There is one drawback to Tientsing which is really insufferable. All the wells are salt, and the inhabitants are obliged to drink the loathsome water of the river. In order to cleanse it, it is first placed in large jars that the impurities may settle at the bottom, and then filtered. But nothing can purge it so as to convince one that the disgusting matter, which forces itself upon one as one sails up the stream, has been entirely got rid of.

We went to see some of the curiosity shops. There was a great deal of porcelain to which the dealers and local connoisseurs assigned wonderful dates and fine titles, but nothing that would be cared for in England; and the prices were simply outrageous, for the merchants will pay any mad sum that is asked by the rascally dealers. There were some very fine specimens of cloisonné enamel, but if the sums demanded for the porcelain were high, the enamels were ten times dearer. I saw a quantity of Chinese picture-books; they were not fit to buy, although some had great merit for delicacy of drawing.

They each represented a story, generally the "Harlot's Progress," from a Chinese point of view, very coarse, and without Hogarth's grim retribution at the end. Of course, where such drawings are openly exposed for sale there is no great strictness of morals, and Tientsing is famous, or rather infamous, even in China, for every bestial and degrading vice.

The European settlement of Tientsing is about two miles distant from the Chinese city. There are some fairly good houses built by the side of a broad bund or quay, and they command fabulous rents. The same municipal system which obtains at Shanghai has been established here; and, on the whole, the community shows signs of prosperity, although the port has been a disappointment to those who expected that it would reach an importance such as to crush Shanghai and its other rivals, or, at all events, to divert a considerable portion of their trade. For the first year or two after its establishment the business done was very great, and large fortunes were made; one merchant, for example, is just retiring with a fortune of £5000 a year, accumulated since 1861. But the Chinese, cunning in trade, very

soon found out that it answered their purpose better to charter steamers, and have consignments made to themselves directly, than to buy from the agents of the great houses; consequently, as the trade is entirely import, the Europeans are finding less and less to do. The *Yuen-tse-Fee*, although she hails from Glasgow, and is nominally owned by Messrs. Trautmann and Co., a German firm, is in reality chiefly, if not entirely, the property of a dirty little Chinese comprador, whom I saw, and to whom the whole of her cargo was consigned.

LETTER IV

PEKING, *23rd May* 1865.

WE left Tientsing early on Friday morning the 19th, by which means we had the tide in our favour, and were able to get quicker clear of the hideous sights and smells of the river as it runs through the town. We each had a boat; Saurin's was the drawing-room, mine the dining-room, and his servant occupied the third as kitchen. They were capital roomy boats, covered in with hoods of bamboo and rattan matting, and with a sort of dresser in each upon which we spread our beds. Each had a crew of three men, and in Saurin's, which was the biggest, there was a boy besides. They were very cheery, hard-working fellows, and indeed they had no sinecure, for although the wind was ostensibly in our favour, still the river winds round such sharp twists and elbows that in every other reach it was dead against

us, and we had to proceed laboriously by dint of towing and punting. But the harder they worked the better humoured the crew seemed to be, and the boy especially distinguished himself by zeal equalling that of an unpaid attaché. The shoals are innumerable, and we were constantly crossing the river backwards and forwards, along a course marked out by twigs stuck in the mud. There is no scenery to enjoy, nothing but interminable fields of millet, and here and there a little wood. There is not a hillock to be seen, and we were lucky in being as short a time as possible over what must be a very dull journey. We reached Tungchou at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Here we found our horses, with an escort which had been sent down with them to meet us.

Tungchou was very busy. A fleet of junks had come in with grain, and the quay was alive with crowds of coolies, many of them as naked as they were born, discharging cargo, sifting corn, and carrying it into granaries. Our appearance produced some astonishment, for "foreign devils" are hardly yet quite familiar objects so far north. Tungchou was the place

where the unfortunate English prisoners were taken in 1860, and where Wade and Crealock, carrying a flag of truce and demanding to parley with the commander, were fired upon and narrowly escaped with their lives. It is fortified, as all the northern cities are, but its walls would only be a security against native warriors. The roads in this part of the world are miracles of badness, and it is not difficult to conceive the tortures that the English prisoners must have suffered when they were conveyed along them in native carts without springs, and having their hands and heels tied together behind them with cords tightened by water. Every inch of the road to Peking is famous from the events of that time. Some way outside Tungchou we rode over the bridge of Palikao,[1] where the Chinese crossed their spears with the French bayonets, and held their own for half an hour. From this bridge the Général de Montauban takes his title. Its kylins and stone flags still bear traces of shot and shell. Riding through dust over one's pony's hocks, and raising a cloud at every step, is very dry

[1] Pa Li Chiao, the Eight Li Bridge (a Li is about a third of a mile), so called from its distance from Peking.

work, and I was glad when we struck off the main road, and, coming upon a tea-house in a shady nook, stopped to rest and refresh. The people received us with the utmost *bonhomie* and civility, and brought us delicious tea, without milk or sugar, in bowls, hard-boiled eggs, and a sort of roll-twist fried instead of baked. We soon had ten or twelve yellow gentlemen round us, eagerly asking all sorts of questions about ourselves, our ages, and belongings. Murray talks Chinese fluently, and Saurin has also some knowledge of it, so we got on capitally. Our ages always puzzle Chinamen. They neither wear beard nor moustache until they have reached the age of forty, so they think that all Europeans who wear such appendages must have passed that age. A single eye-glass is, however, the possession which commands the most astonishment. They are familiar with spectacles and double eye-glasses, for they themselves wear them of portentous size, and mounted in thick brass or tortoise-shell rims. But a single glass is indeed a marvel, and provokes much laughter. Though the peculiarities of foreigners amuse the Chinese as much as theirs do us, it is

singular how their natural courtesy prevents their showing it in the offensive manner that every Englishman has experienced in some foreign countries. I had expected to find the country on this side of Peking flat, ugly, and barren. Flat it certainly is, but there are plenty of trees and rich fields, and it cannot be called ugly. The villages and graves argue an immense population. It is not till one is under the very walls of the town that one sees Peking. The walls are high, ruinous, battlemented, and picturesque, of a fine deep gray colour. They are capped at intervals by towers of fantastic Chinese architecture, and, with their lofty gates, make a strange and striking picture. As a means of defence against modern artillery the walls of Peking are probably absurd. However, before I tell you anything about Peking I had better know something myself. At present I only know that I was very hot, very tired, and as dusty as the oldest press in the Record office, when I rode into the court of Her Majesty's Legation, where I received the warmest welcome from Wade, the *chargé d'affaires*.

We have received bad Chinese news. Sang-

kolinsin, the Mongol chief who commanded at the Peiho in 1859, and was temporarily disgraced for not being able to beat off the allies in 1860, has been killed by the rebels in the province of Shantung, some 400 miles hence. He was reputed a brave soldier and an honest man. Although the Chinese affect to disregard the importance of the intelligence, there is no doubt that it is very serious. The fire is burning everywhere, and they cannot or will not take the proper means to put it out.

Note.—I should wish to add here one word of admiration and respect for the memory of Sir Thomas Wade, my first chief in China. He had been Lord Clyde's adjutant, but gave up the army for diplomacy. A great student and master of many languages, his Chinese scholarship won the admiration even of the learned mandarins with whom he had to deal. During the two Chinese Wars he distinguished himself, not only by his great abilities as a negotiator, but also by the most dauntless courage. Generous and self-sacrificing to a fault, he was one of the greatest gentlemen I ever met.—1900.

LETTER V

PEKING, *1st June* 1865.

WHEN Wade was in England last year Lord Stanley said to him: "Peking's a gigantic failure, isn't it? not a two-storied house in the whole place, eh?" To Lord Stanley's practical eye, no doubt, it might be a failure, but an artist would find much to admire and put on paper.

Pe-king, which means the northern capital, as Nan-king means the southern, consists of two cities, the Chinese and the Tartar, and within this latter, again, is the Imperial city, which contains the palace and precincts of the court. Both cities are surrounded by walls of dark-gray brick; those of the Tartar city are fifty feet high, forty feet wide at the top, and about sixty feet below; the walls of the Chinese city are less important, being only thirty feet high. These walls have battlements and loop-

holes for guns. That of the Chinese city has fallen into decay, but that of the Tartar is more carefully repaired. At intervals are lofty watch-towers standing out against the sky. High towers stand also above the gates, which are closed at sunset, after which time ingress and egress are forbidden.

The streets are broad roads, in most cases unpaved, and in all uncared for. They are flanked on each side by shops and low houses, but their breadth is lessened by the countless stalls and stands of hucksters of all sorts that take them up often in quadruple rows. In this region of dust and dirt the streets are equally filthy summer and winter. Both in the Chinese and Tartar cities there are large open spaces and buildings standing in their own grounds, covering areas of many acres. In the former city these are the temples of the Buddhist and Taoist religions, in the latter they are the palaces of the Emperor and persons of distinction. These grounds, planted as they are with lofty trees, give a great beauty to the town, and often in the heart of either city there are spots which are pictures of village life. Standing among these groves of trees the

brilliant colours and fantastic designs of the Chinese architecture have a wonderfully pleasing effect. The wall of the imperial palace, covered with highly glazed yellow tiles, with towers at the corners shining like gold in the sun, is especially striking. Whichever way one turns there is something grotesque and barbarous to be seen, and the signs of decay and rot do not detract from the picture. In fact Peking is like a vast curiosity shop, with all the dust and dirt which are among the conditions of bric-à-brac. It would be pleasant-looking and admiring were it not for the difficulties of riding through the city owing to the enormous crowds which block the way—carts, porters, camels, chairs, pedlars, beggars, lamas, muleteers, horse-copers from Mongolia, archers on horseback, mandarins with their suites, small-footed women, great ladies in carts, closely veiled to keep off the gaze of the profane vulgar. In short, every variety of yellow and brown humanity, not to speak of dogs and pigs, get into one's path at every moment, and raise clouds of dust, which fill eyes, ears, hair, mouth, and nose, and temporarily destroy every sense save that of touch. It is as if the dust of

all the Derby days since the institution of that race (by the bye I wonder what horse has won it this year) had been borne by the winds to find a permanent home here. A dust-storm in the north of China is a natural phenomenon. Clouds draw over the sky as if a thunderstorm was going to burst. In my inexperience the first time I saw this I expected rain to fall, but instead of rain there came a fine dust penetrating everything and not to be shut out by door or window. This nuisance, which comes to us from the great Mongolian deserts, besides hurting the eyes as common dust by filling them with extraneous matter, has chemical properties which produce a smarting and burning pain. Dust-storms are sometimes so thick that men lose their way as in a London fog. It is indeed "a darkness that may be felt."

The distance round the walls of Peking is something like twenty-three miles, of which fifteen must be given to the Tartar city, which is square in shape and lies to the north of the oblong Chinese city. Tradition, and the mystery which for so many years hung over the capital, have assigned to it an exaggerated population. The Chinese affected to believe it contained

two million souls, and that no capital in the world could compete with it. This may have been the case in the time of the Emperor Chien-Lung, who reigned from 1736 to 1795 A.D. But nowadays, judging from the enormous empty spaces, and from the gardens and courtyards, which no gentleman's residence is without, and even allowing for the dense crowding of some quarters, it probably does not reach a million. It is impossible to form any precise estimate of the numbers of the "Doors and Mouths." Doctors disagree, and I have heard the people of Peking reckoned at various figures, from six hundred thousand to a million and a half. Until Peking was opened to Europeans the southern Chinese used to stick at no lie about it. For instance, if they were told of some great scientific invention such as railways, the electric telegraph, or the like, they would say at once with the utmost coolness, "Have seen! Have seen! Have got plenty Peking side!" And in like manner they lied about its size and population. The country round about Peking seems to be very thickly peopled. I was prepared to find it so, but nevertheless I had hardly expected to see so many human

beings and their traces, which are often very unpleasant, especially in China.

Our Legation is situated in the southern part of the Tartar city. We occupy a most picturesque palace called the Liang Kung Fu, or Palace of the Duke of Liang, which, like all Chinese buildings of importance, covers an immense space of ground. There are courtyards upon courtyards, huge empty buildings with red pillars, used as covered courts, state approaches guarded by two great marble lions, and a number of houses with only a ground floor, each of us inhabiting one to himself. When the Legation first came to live here the whole place was put into repair, and redecorated in the Chinese fashion with fluted roofs of many colours, carved woodwork, kylins of stone and pottery, and all the thousand and one fancies with which the Chinese cover their buildings. Unfortunately the repairs were badly executed, and nothing further has been done to keep matters straight, so the Legation, which ought to be as pretty as possible, is really a disgrace to us. The gardens are a wilderness, the paving of the courts is broken, the walls are tumbling down, and the beautiful

place is going to rack and ruin. In this climate of extreme heat and cold a stitch in time saves ninety-nine.[1] Fancy a residence in the heart of a great and populous city where foxes, scorpions, polecats, weasels, magpies, and other creatures that one expects to find in the wild country, abound. That will give you an idea of how space is wasted in Peking. The great drawback to our palace is its situation. We have more than an hour's ride before we can escape from the city and its stinks, to breathe a breath of fresh air. It requires an immense exercise of energy to face an hour's ride through the streets of Peking in order to get a canter in the open; and I am often half tempted to sell my pony and dismiss my groom, but this would be tantamount to shutting myself up for good in the Legation, for walking at Peking is even more disagreeable than riding.

His Imperial Highness the Prince of Kung, President of the Council, Chief of the Board of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister, and what not besides, sent his card yesterday to announce to Wade that he would pay him an official visit. I enclose you his visiting card.

[1] Great improvements have been effected in late years.

The Prince of Kung is the brother of the late Emperor, and in 1860 was entrusted by him with the negotiations with Lord Elgin and Baron Gros. During the minority of the present Emperor, who is about twelve years old, the two Empresses-dowager[1] are nominally regents; but the Prince has the care of the Emperor's education, and is virtually the regent of the empire. He was very nearly meeting with the fate of Humpty-Dumpty a little while back, for he was accused of selling places, abuse of patronage, and insolence in the Presence. His accuser was supposed to have been instigated by one of the Empresses who is hostile to him, and to have been made cat's-paw of by a court intrigue. However that may be, the Empresses issued an edict in the style of the chorus in the *Agamemnon* which shows how prosperity leads to insolence, and insolence to retribution, and the Prince was deprived of all his offices and glories. For a few days he remained in disgrace, but his brothers came to the rescue, a Grand Council was held, and the Prince was reinstated in the office of Foreign Affairs in consideration of his great services.

[1] See Note, p. 73.

This, however, did not look well for the Prince, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs carries with it such unpopularity that its possession alone might be esteemed a doubtful pleasure; and it was not until his former honours were one by one restored to him that he could be said to be reinstated in court favour. The charges against him were declared unfounded, and it was agreed that the question of insolence was a family matter, and should not interfere with public affairs. Meanwhile his accuser goes about at large, but about as free as a mouse that a cat lets slip out of her claws for a second or two. I would not be in his skin for something.

A little before the hour fixed for the Prince's visit, Hêng-Chi and Tung, two of the Board of Foreign Affairs, arrived to meet him. Hêng-Chi is the man whose name became known in Europe during the war in 1860, and during Parke's and Loch's captivity. He is a little thin old man very like Mr. Meadows, the actor at the Princesses' Theatre, and a great dandy. He wore a pearl gray silk dress turned up with blue. His fan-case, chopstick-case, and other knick-knacks which he wears at

his girdle, are richly embroidered, and mounted with seed pearls and a peculiar clouded pink coral which the Chinese call baby-face coral. His snuff-bottle is of the finest Fei Tsui, or emerald green jade, which is worth its weight in diamonds here, but of all his possessions none is in his eyes more charming than a large silver Geneva turnip watch which he displays with much pride. In his boot, which is of black satin, he carries his pipe with its tiny silver bowl, and a gorgeous Fei Tsui mouth-piece, together with sweetmeats, pills, and other trifles. His white cap with the red tassel of office hanging all round it, has a pink coral button (Hêng-Chi is a mandarin of the first button), and the peacock's feather which falls from it is mounted in more Fei Tsui. To crown all, he wears a pair of spectacles as big as saucers, with broad silver rims. Never was a little old man so pleased with himself; his little airs and graces and *petit-maître* ways are very funny. Tung is a jolly, fat, old mandarin and a great contrast to Hêng-Chi. He is a great man of letters, and has translated Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" into Chinese verse. That is, Wade gave him a literal version

of the English, and he made a poem of it, which is said to have great merit.

In due course of time the Prince arrived in his chair attended by a number of running footmen, and an escort mounted on ponies. Wade and I received him, and I was presented to him as Mi-ta-jên, the official name by which my arrival was announced to the Chinese Foreign Office—we are all obliged to have monosyllabic names for our intercourse with the Chinese. Sir F. Bruce was Pu-ta-jên (the Chinese cannot pronounce an R, so they rendered his name as Pu-lu-su), Wade is Wei-ta-jên. Ta-jên, literally "great man," is a title denoting official rank, and is that which is borne by the mandarins.

The Prince is a young man about 28 years of age, judging by appearances. He is pock-marked, as indeed is almost every Chinaman I have seen. He is very shortsighted, and has the same trick of screwing up his eyes that I have, and I could not help thinking what a caricature we should have made as we sat opposite each other making faces. As soon as the Prince had taken his seat he drew his pipe out of his boot, and one of his own attendants

brought him fire, serving him kneeling on one knee. Tea was brought as a matter of course, and then the conversation began. The great man had a short, flippant manner, and this it was that so nearly brought him to grief. He was immensely amused by an English bell-pull, and a mother-of-pearl paper-knife which lay on the table. My single eyeglass was a real boon to the Prince. Whenever he was getting the worst of an argument, and was at a loss for an answer, he would stop short, throw up his hands in amazement, and pointing at me cry out, "A single eyeglass! marvellous!" By thus creating a diversion at my expense he gave himself time to consider his reply. He seemed very friendly with Wade, and full of jokes and fun—of course I could not understand a word of what was said, but I took refuge behind a big cigar, and looked on vastly amused by our guest's ways. I thought I detected a cruel, cunning look behind all his affectation of good-humour.

When the Prince had gone, Hêng-Chi, who, besides being part-Minister for Foreign Affairs, is also a general officer, and many other things, for pluralism is the order of the day, invited

us to a review and breakfast afterwards on the 3rd of June, at six in the morning.

It may be a calumny, but I strongly suspect Hêng-Chi of dyeing his tail.

Note.—The senior Empress-dowager, who had been the first wife of the Emperor Hsien Fêng, appears to have been more or less a cypher. The real power was wielded by the Empress-mother Tsu Hsi. This remarkable lady was according to some accounts a slave girl, according to others the daughter of a member of the imperial family. Nor are the two statements incompatible in a country where adoption of children holds good. The Emperor wishing to raise a girl in his harem to the highest position would only need to command one of his relations to adopt her, and she would at once be an imperial princess as much as if she had been born in the purple, or rather in the yellow.

The senior Empress-dowager, or Eastern Empress as she was called, died on 18th April 1881, and the power was then absolutely and solely in the hands of the Empress-mother. The latter's son, the Emperor Tung Chi, had died without issue in 1875, and his cousin, a child of four, was raised to the Lung Wei or Dragon's throne in his stead. The regency remained as before with the two Dowager-empresses.

Dr. Wells Williams, in his *Middle Kingdom*, a perfect encyclopædia on all Chinese matters, says, "The Empress-dowager is the most important subject within the palace, and His Majesty does homage at frequent intervals, by making the highest ceremony of nine prostrations before her. When the widow of Kia King reached the age of sixty in 1836 many honours were conferred by the Emperor. An extract from the ordinance issued on this festival will exhibit the regard paid her by the Sovereign :—

"Our extensive dominions have enjoyed the utmost prosperity under the shelter of a glorious and enduring state of felicity—our exalted race has become most illustrious under the protection of that honoured relative to whom the whole court looks up. To her happiness, already unalloyed, the highest degree of felicity has been superadded, causing joy and gladness to every inmate of the Six Palaces. The grand ceremonies of the occasion shall exceed in splendour the

utmost requirements of the ancients in regard to the human relations, calling forth the gratulation of the whole Empire. It is indispensable that the observances of the occasion should be of an exceedingly unusual nature, in order that our reverence for our august parent and care of her may both be equally and gloriously displayed. . . . In the first month of the present winter occurs the sixtieth anniversary of Her Majesty's sacred natal day. At the opening of the happy period the sun and the moon shed their united genial influences on it. When commencing anew the revolution of the sexagenary cycle the honour thereof adds increase to her felicity. Looking upward and beholding her glory, we repeat our gratulations, and announce the event to heaven, to earth, to our ancestors, and to the patron-gods of the empire. On the nineteenth day of the tenth moon, in the fifteenth year of Tao Kwang, we will conduct the princes, the nobles, and all the high officers, both civil and military, into the presence of the great Empress, benign and dignified, universally placid, thoroughly virtuous, tranquil, and self-collected, in favours unbounded; and we will then present our congratulations on the glad occasion, the anniversary of her natal day. The occasion yields a happiness equal to what is enjoyed by goddesses in heaven, and while announcing it to the gods and to our people, we will tender to her blessings unbounded."—*Middle Kingdom*, vol. i. p. 410.

Rations to soldiers, honours, promotions, pardons, etc., were ordered in honour of the day—"Every perfectly filial son or obedient grandson, every upright husband or chaste wife, upon proofs being brought forward, shall have a monument erected with an inscription in his or her honour." Soldiers who had reached the age of ninety or one hundred received money to erect an honorary portal, and tombs, temples, and bridges were ordered to be repaired; but, as Dr. Williams slily remarks, "how many of these exceedingly great and special favours were actually carried into effect cannot be stated."

This edict of the Emperor Tao Kwang is of high interest at this moment (1900), as illustrating the position of the present Dowager-empress Tsu Hsi, which has seemed so incomprehensible to us Westerns. An ambitious woman, with the master mind of an Elizabeth or a Catherine, would, it is easy to perceive, find opportunities which she has certainly turned to the best, or worst, advantage.

4th June.

I wished my friend General Hêng-Chi with all his soldiers a long way off when my boy came to pull me out of bed at daybreak yesterday morning. We had had a great storm the night before, so the dust was laid, but *en revanche* the streets were a sea of mud, and many of them regular rivers, and we had to flounder on, our horses putting their feet in holes at every step. It took us nearly an hour and a half of this work to get to the parade ground on the Anting plain. The ground was kept by means of sticks and red string, with a soldier at each stick. We were shown straight to a small blue tent, where the general received us with much ceremony. When we had drunk tea the three generals, the Russian Embassy, and ourselves left the tent and took up our place on a small mound. Our appearance was the signal for the military music to strike up. The band was composed of about twelve Chinamen, and their instruments were large sea shells or conches, out of which they produced the most dismal and distressing and continuous howl that it ever was my bad luck to listen to. I hardly know what

to compare it to. You have heard the noise in a shell — it was like that, but magnified a million times. As soon as we had taken our position, a soldier in front of us waved a huge flag, and the business of the day began. There were about two thousand soldiers, and they were to exercise, not with the swords, and bows, and shields of "the Braves," but according to our drill book, which Wade has translated for them, and with rifles and guns given them by the Russians. They went through their evolutions respectably, so said Wade, who is an old soldier and a first-rate drill; but I own that when they advanced close up to us and delivered a volley bang in our faces, I felt that it was not unlikely that, as at our Volunteer reviews, a stray ramrod might have been left in a rifle. However, no accident occurred, barring the bursting of the powder box of one of the big guns, by which four men were severely scorched and five put *hors de combat*, for the lieutenant in charge of the gun was then and there collared and summarily bambooed, *coram populo*, for carelessness in giving the word to fire before the powder box was closed. Such is discipline!

The sun was beginning to be very powerful, so it was a great relief when the review was declared to be over, and it was announced that each of the men was to receive three halfpence for his good conduct that day in the field. Upon the hearing of this joyful intelligence, the army to a man went down on one knee, in token of gratitude, though they knew perfectly well that they never would see the money. Poor devils!

Breakfast was served in a temple hard by. When we sat down Hêng-Chi was not to be found. It turned out that, with a thoughtfulness which would have done credit to many a more civilised host, he had gone to see that the men of our and the Russian escorts were well cared for.

A Chinese meal exactly reverses the order of the things which is practised in Europe. First came cups of tea, and when these were all cleared away two tiny saucers were placed before each person. Then the dessert and sweets were put upon the table; oranges, apples, candied walnuts, sweets of all kinds, hemp seed done up with flour and sugar, apricot kernels preserved in oil and dried, and other delicacies.

Next came the savoury meats—of these the most remarkable were sea-slugs, like turtle-soup in taste, bamboo sprouts, sharks' fins, and deers' sinews—all gelatinous dishes are the most highly prized; the famous bird's-nest soup is just like isinglass not quite boiled down. Finally came a sort of soup of rice. I found it very difficult at first to eat with chopsticks. The manner of eating is to dip your chopsticks into any one of the bowls, and transfer a morsel to your own saucers, which are not changed, neither are the chopsticks wiped, during the whole proceeding. If you wish to pay a person a compliment, you select a tit-bit with your own chopsticks and put it on your neighbour's plate, and he does the same in return. This gives the entertainment the appearance of an indecorous scramble, for one is continually leaning across two or three people to repay some civility. The dishes are very rich, and I should think unwholesome in the extreme. There were upwards of sixty different eatables put upon the table, and I must own that although my chopsticks went into nearly every little bowl, there was not one which did not please my taste. Native wine was served to us in little cups of the size of our

liqueur glasses; it had rather a pleasant taste, and was very dry. As soon as breakfast was over the Chinese gentlemen produced out of their boots—which seem an inexhaustible receptacle for everything, from tobacco to state papers—small pieces of paper, with which they wiped their mouths and ivory chopsticks, and then came a piece of Chinese politeness which is very offensive to Europeans; for it is good manners here, out of compliment to the host, and in token of having eaten well and been satisfied, to produce the longest and loudest eructations, and Hêng-Chi and the two generals left nothing to be desired in that respect, making a great display of good breeding. Tea and conversation in the court of the temple brought my first Chinese entertainment to a close. I can't tell you how strange it seemed to me to begin with dessert and end with soup!

LETTER VI

PEKING, 23*rd June* 1865.

SINCE I wrote to you last I have neither seen nor done anything worth recording. The thermometer has been standing at from 95° to 107° in our courtyard, so there is not much temptation to go sight-seeing, or even to move outside the Legation; inside, the days are as like as twins. However, there is a bag going to-day, so I must try and patch up a letter.

We are thinking of making a move to the hills next Monday; we have almost decided on a temple called Pi Yün Ssŭ, about 12½ miles from this. I shall be very glad to go, for the town is becoming abominably stuffy and hot, and the dust is something beyond belief. We shall probably stay six weeks or two months, coming into Peking on mail days. We are forced to

take our whole establishment with us, so it is not worth while going for a shorter time.

By the bye my establishment has been increased by a teacher; not as in Europe, a master who is paid so much to come for an hour a day, but a man who regularly enters my service, and is at my beck and call whenever I want him. I have taken a header into Chinese, and am floundering about in a sea of difficulties. One great disadvantage that one labours under is that the native teachers, and there are no others, of course don't speak a word of any language but their own. At first, therefore, Ku, that's my man's name, and I used to sit and look at one another in a hopeless state of unintelligibility, until either he got bored, made signs of having a stomach-ache, and took his leave, or I could stand him no longer and dismissed him. However, it is surprising how quick a man may pick up, not the language of a strange country, but a jargon that will pass current, if he is dependent upon it for the everyday necessaries of life. Teachers, servants, cooks, and grooms, all must receive their orders in Chinese; shopping and bargain-driving increase one's stock of words; so one

way or another Ku and I get on pretty tolerably. He will accompany me to the hills, and as I mean to get through much work there, I hope that by the time you get this letter I shall be well started up the stream.

A pleasanter addition to my personnel, and a sweeter, for he does not eat garlic nor smoke opium, is a small Manilla poodle, Nou-nou by name, whom I have inherited. He has consoled the exile of a succession of diplomatists at Peking, and has finally fallen into my hands. He is the jolliest little dog, and has the most companionable ways. Although only a shade bigger than your Tiny, he is as plucky as Tom Sayers, and is the terror of strange dogs and Chinamen; indeed his valour being much too great for his body often brings him to trouble. For many years he would fly at any dog that he saw in any part of the Legation, and bid him get out of his majesty's way; but now he is no longer in his *première jeunesse*, having received much hard usage from dogs over whom as puppies he had been used to exercise a terror, especially from one big black retriever, who won't stand any nonsense. Nou-nou has taken possession of our courtyard, where by tacit

consent the other dogs seem to respect his authority. If one of them so much as shows his nose there, Nou-nou pricks his ears, his tail curls as crisply as of old, and he flies at the intruder, who quickly disappears. Here Nou-nou leads a happy life; every one has a kind word for him, and his only grievance is, that on Mondays and Thursdays he is carried off by a big Chinaman, from his holy looks like a pre-Raphaelite picture, known as "the apostle," and summarily washed.

We have better news from Shantung. The Imperialist troops have driven back the rebels. There is now no danger of this province being invaded, which might have been a serious thing for us, and certainly would have resulted in the sacking of Tientsing. It is really provoking, after all the pains that have been taken to induce this wretched Government to save itself, which it could easily do by the most ordinary exertion, to see half a dozen archers outside the gates making such practice at a target twenty yards off as any girl of eighteen, member of a toxophilite club at home, would be ashamed of. Yet this is the stuff which the Chinese Government are content to accept as the means of put-

ting down the insurrection. The troops that they are drilling in the European fashion are merely a sop to foreign representatives, and not the evidence of earnest wishes to improve. Self-help and self-improvement seem repugnant to the nature of this belly-patting Buddhist nation. They are willing enough to get foreign officers, especially Englishmen, in whom the example of Colonel Gordon has given them unbounded confidence, to drill and lead their troops; but they will do nothing for themselves; and there is a class of superior officers (such as Li, the governor of the province in which Shanghai is situated) who, having acquired a certain reputation for valour and military ability among their own people, consider it beneath their dignity to serve under foreign officers. The obstacles which such men throw in the way of the latter, together with the uncertainty of being able to obtain supplies and pay for the troops under their command, render their position intolerable, as Colonel Gordon found on more than one occasion. The English officers who have been lent to instruct the Imperialists have found their way in many instances anything but smooth, and have had great difficulty in carrying

out the measures which they deemed necessary. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the rebels, whose ranks are swelled by the local banditti, secret societies, and Imperialist soldiers mutinous for want of pay, should still show a head.

With this internal difficulty pressing them sorely, the Chinese continue persistently to break their treaty engagements with the Great Powers, any of which, if it were so minded, has a handle for blowing up the whole concern. Wên-Hsiang, who is the chief of the Board of Foreign Affairs [which he virtually directs, although the Prince of Kung is nominally at its head], and who is the most advanced and patriotic man in the Government, is fully conscious of the danger of the situation; but unfortunately he is a timid man, and it is one thing to convince a Chinaman, and another to induce him to act upon his conviction. So the treaties continue to be broken, and the existence of the present dynasty in China hangs upon the patience of foreign governments, who have too great a stake in the country to sink the ship so long as there is a hope of her floating.

It is only fair to say, on the other hand, that the residence of foreign representatives at Peking during the last four years has certainly been productive of some good. As an evidence of this, Dr. Martin, an American missionary, has produced, at the expense of the Board of Foreign Affairs and with the co-operation of a commission specially appointed by the Prince of Kung, a translation into the Chinese language of Wheaton's *International Law.* To this Tung-ta-jên, whom I mentioned in my last letter to you as the translator of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," has added a preface. This preface, coming as it does from the vice-president of the College of Historians, one of the chiefs of the lettered class in China, adds great authority to the work, the publication of which is certainly an event of importance in the history of the country.

LETTER VII

PI YÜN SSŬ, *7th July* 1865.

YOU will see by the date of this that we have beaten a retreat from the dust, heat, and filth of the city, and that our "villegiatura" has begun. Indeed, Peking was becoming insupportable. The thermometer when we left was standing at 108° in the shade, the highest degree which it has reached for these three years, and I was heartily glad to turn my back upon the Legation gates.

The plain between these hills and the town is very beautiful. It is thickly studded with farmsteads, knolls of trees, and tombs, which are always the prettiest spots in China, for as a balance against the dirt and squalor in which they pass their lives, the Chinese choose the most romantic and delightful places for their final habitations. The soil is wonderfully fertile, and yields two crops in the year, so that usually

the plain bears every appearance of prosperity; but this year, owing to the excessive heat and drought, the first crop has failed, and the fields are parched and burnt up. In vain the Emperor prays for rain; it only comes in rare and scanty showers, and the fierce sun bakes the ground harder than ever. The country folk are in great distress, and food is at famine prices. Yet they seem happy and contented, and when we asked one of the priests here whether there was no danger of a famine riot, he answered, "Oh, no! the people about here are too great fools to get up a disturbance." Those that are hardest up will sell their daughters into bondage, and there will be an end of the matter.

The hills west of Peking are the Switzerland of Northern China. They are not very high nor extraordinarily beautiful, but there are some very pretty gorges and valleys, richly wooded, and at any rate the air is fresh and pure. Every gorge has a perfect nest of temples, built by the pious emperors of the Ming dynasty and the earlier Tartars, for which good deeds the *Corps diplomatique* at Peking cannot be too grateful. Properly speaking,

according to the rules of their order, the Buddhist monks are forbidden to receive any money for the hospitality which they offer to strangers, so when the Chinese go to stay at a temple they restore or beautify some part of it as a return; but we prefer paying a few dollars, and in spite of their statutes the arrangement seems to suit the monks as well as it does us.

Our temple is called "Pi Yün Ssŭ," "the temple of the azure clouds," a romantic name, and certainly the place is worthy of it. It is built on terraces ascending the hill to a length of about half a mile, and on every terrace is a shrine, each more beautiful (if that is the proper word to apply to the grotesque buildings of this country) than the last; black and white marble statues and vases, bronze dragons, alto-relievos and basso-relievos representing kings and warriors, gods and goddesses, and fabulous monsters, all of rare workmanship,—inscriptions graven on marble and stone, and bronze or gilt upon wood, meet one at every step; and the whole is set in a nest of rock-work, fountains, woods, and gardens. At the top is a small temple more in the Indian than the Chinese style, and here there is a very curious

idol with ten heads, three large ones at the bottom, from which three smaller ones spring, in their turn carrying three lesser ones surmounted by a single very small head. The hands are in proportion. This little place commands a panoramic view over the plain, with the walls and towers of Peking in the distance.

Our habitation consists of several little houses on one side of the temple; we dine in an open pavilion, surrounded by a pond and artificial rockery, with ferns and mosses in profusion; high trees shade it from the sun, and close by us a cold fountain pours out of the rock into the pond, in which we can ice our wine to perfection. The pond was dried up, and the fountain had been turned from its channel, when we arrived; but we got together a few coolies, and soon set that right. Fancy our feelings on coming here, when we were told that if there came no rain we could have no bath! This too in a climate where the hot nights make a morning wash doubly necessary. The priest had hardly said the word, when a tremendous thunderstorm broke over the mountain and set our minds at rest, and next morning we discovered that we could have the most

delicious natural bath. Our life here is very simple and very, very dull. We are only two —Saurin and myself. We rise at any hour after daybreak, breakfast at eight, dine at three; after dinner we go for a ride, or a scramble over the mountain, and come home to tea at about eight or nine. We sit smoking our cheroots for perhaps an hour, talking always about home and watching the fire-flies, that, according to Chinese tradition, served as lamps to Confucius and his disciples. A visit from or to the Russian Legation, who have got a temple at about an hour and a half's ride from here, is the only break to the monotony of our daily life. I have my teacher with me here, and work with him at the language from breakfast to dinner; that is my serious occupation, and about as hard a task as one could wish for. I carry about my lessons for the rest of the day written on paper fans—a capital dodge for keeping one's work before one. We are rather bothered by mosquitoes, and a most venomous little insect called the sand-fly, yellow in colour, and smaller than a midge, which is lucky, for if he were of the size of a blue-bottle I should think his bite would be fatal. There

are quantities of scorpions too; one of our men was stung the other day. We heard a great wailing and crying one night, for all the world like an Irish wake; next morning our servants told us that the cook's assistant had been stung in the hand, and that he had died in an hour, but that he had come to rights again, and was getting well. This sounded something like being "kilt entirely." The man's presence at the temple illustrates a custom of the country; of course, as is the way of the East, no one can move without a large retinue. There must be a valet for each man, and a groom for each horse, and a man or two to do nothing, and two or three more to look on and see them do it. But besides this, like Thackeray's description of Irishmen and their poor relations, no Chinaman is so poor or mean but what he can find a poorer and a meaner to do part of his work. A coolie earning three dollars a month will pay another one dollar a month to help him, and he in his turn will give a boy a few cash, that he may enjoy his ease and his opium. The man who was stung was the cook's poor relation. Although his brother and the other men supposed him to be dying, and finally to

have actually died, they never came and told us, nor did they get any assistance for him. We heard the noise, but one of our servants has a very pretty little talent for tickling a lute, and there was so little difference between the sounds of the wake and those of the concerts he gets up, that we thought the hullabaloo was only a melancholy variety of the latter, so we took no notice of it. As far as Chinese remedies are concerned, better be without them. It is almost impossible to believe the amount of ignorance which exists in China about medicine and surgery. Native doctors, who never dissect, are utterly ignorant for the most part of the position of the heart, the lungs, and the other principal organs. They are ignorant of the difference between arteries and veins, nor do they understand the circulation, looking upon the several pulses of the body as the effects of separate causes. All diseases are attributed by them to their favourite doctrine, "hot and cold influences." They have a certain knowledge of the use of drugs, and of mercury in particular, but their remedy above all others is acupuncture. Some days ago my groom had an attack of diarrhœa, and his medical man

pricked him underneath the tongue for it! Sir John Davis tells a story of a doctor who wanted to prick a man for hernia. If in these prickings they cut into an artery, and the man dies, why, so much the worse for him! it is fate. Astrology plays a great part in their medical art, certain planets being supposed to influence certain parts of the body. It is one among many instances in which one sees the analogy between the present condition of China and Europe in the Middle Ages.

LETTER VIII

PEKING, 8*th July* 1865.

WE have ridden in to spend three days, copying despatches and sighing for our "cool grot." The town seemed too beastly as we came in. Peking, as Southey said of Exeter, "is ancient and stinks." The "Beggar's Bridge," which we have to pass every time we go into the Chinese city, and nearly every time we go out, is the most loathsome and stinking exhibition that it ever was my fate to come across. Here every day a hundred or two of the most degraded specimens of humanity congregate and beg. By far the greater majority of them are clothed only in dirt, and all sorts of repulsive cutaneous complaints; some have a linen rag, but it is worn over the shoulders, and in no way serves as a decent covering. Lice, mange, scrofula, leprosy, and filth are allowed to remain undisturbed by water or drugs.

They are a stock-in-trade, and as such rather encouraged than not. It is a sickening sight when these creatures come and perform the kŏtŏu to us, prostrating themselves in the dust or mud, which is scarcely as dirty as themselves. I spare you a description of the food I have seen them eating. If ever I get back to Europe, I feel that the Beggar's Bridge will be a nightmare to me for the rest of my life. All this strikes one with double force after spending a fortnight in the country among the healthy, sunburnt natives of the hills. I assure you that they look quite handsome after the yellow townsfolk. It would amuse our friends at home, if they could see us the centre of a group of thirty or forty of these brown villagers, in some out-of-the-way valley where Englishmen are about as often seen as Chinamen in Yorkshire. They ask us all the most absurd questions about ourselves, our clothes, and our dogs, who are quite as great objects of wonder as ourselves. They never will believe that Nou-nou is not some variety of sheep, and Saurin's pointer, a very handsome young dog of French royal breed, comes in for much admiration. The women are all frightened at

us, and keep well out of the way; we see them timidly peering out of their doors at the foreign barbarians who kill little children, and use their eyes for photography, but it is seldom that anything but a stout old matron of great courage will venture to come near us. The people are beginning to get rid of their prejudices against us, and to see that we mean them no injury; at any rate they are quite friendly, and seem to look upon us as harmless eccentric creatures, but very ugly. As for personal safety, no one ever dreams of carrying arms, either by day or by night, and nobody is ever insulted or attacked.

We hear bad news of mercantile prospects in the south. Notwithstanding their having been hit so hard last season, the merchants have been speculating again more rashly than ever, and vying with each other in buying up tea. The Chinese are quite up to this, and have leagued together to raise prices. The nearer our merchants have got to the tea-growing districts by means of the opening of new ports, the dearer tea has become. Tea was never so cheap as when Canton was the only outlet to the market. This seems a paradox, but it is easily explained. The mer-

chants competing to buy on the spot have caused the Chinese growers to send up their prices to any height, and the foreigner cannot transport the tea south so cheaply as the native, so that both the original price paid to the farmers, and the cost of transport, have been raised, and the merchants are paying the penalty of their own hunger for new markets.

As a set-off against this bad news, we have good tidings with regard to the rebels, who were in Shantung; they appear to be dispersed, some south and some west, and the capital is safe. For once the Chinese can lay the praise to themselves, they having acted without foreign aid.

LETTER IX

PI YÜN SSŬ, 21*st July* 1865.

I DARESAY you will be curious to hear something more of our temple life than I have been able to tell you hitherto. We have been exploring the neighbourhood in all directions, and certainly there is plenty to be seen, although all the points of interest are temples, either Buddhist or Taoist, and the description of one might hold good for all. The most curious of these is at a distance from us of about a mile and a half; it is called Wo-Fo-Ssŭ, "the temple of the Sleeping Buddha, from a huge sleeping idol which it contains, about 20 feet in length. At first I thought the figure was meant for a female, a sort of Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, but the attendant priest assured me that it was meant for Buddha himself. The idol lies sleeping in a huge shrine, surrounded by a number of lesser saints. His slippers, made of

softest velvet and satin, are lying at his feet ready for him to put on whenever it shall suit his Holiness to get up; each of his attendants is likewise provided with slippers. He has been sleeping now for more than 700 years, so he brings no great profit to the shoemaking trade. The shrine is held in great reverence, and is decorated with an inscription by the Emperor Chien-Lung himself, who seems never to have lost an opportunity of writing and building; of both these favourite pastimes of his, Wo-Fo-Ssŭ bears examples, for leading out of one of the courts of the temple is a most beautiful little Imperial abode, now falling into decay, like everything else here, but which once must have been perfectly lovely. Of all the pavilions, courts, rockeries, and shrines, the Lotus Pond alone remains in all its glory. Equally in ruins is an Imperial hunting lodge, close by our temple, standing in the middle of a deer-park which reaches up to the top of the mountain, fenced in by a high wall. This, too, was a favourite resort of Chien-Lung, and he must have spent a king's ransom in decorating it; a gate or two, here and there a summer-house, and one pagoda of yellow and green tiles, show

what it must once have been. But the whole place has crumbled to pieces, and the deer and game stray at pleasure through what were once the gorgeous apartments of the Emperor. The yellow tiles here, worked in the highest relief with dragons, griffins, lions, and other emblems, are marvellous specimens of potter's work. Whole pediments are made in small pieces and so cunningly joined together that they look like one block. A very small annual expense would have kept the place in perfect repair; but to keep in repair is not an Asiatic attribute. Alongside one of the paths of the park, which is full of the most delightful resting-places, I noticed the remains of what looked like a number of stalls at a fancy-fair, and on inquiring I found that they were little shops at which it was the privilege of the eunuchs of the palace to sell trinkets and other trifles to the Emperor as he passed with his wives.

Among other things that Chien-Lung did for these temples, he imported from the palace of Jo Hol in Manchuria a quantity of a kind of tree cigala, by Europeans called wee-wees from the noise they make, by the Chinese called Ta-tsŭ-chi-liao. They are the most curious insects,

and make a clatter which is as if it were produced by the metal tongues of an accordion. They go on all day and drive one nearly distracted. Sometimes one can hardly hear oneself speak, but the Chinese delight in them, and my teacher told me the story of their introduction as if he had been speaking of an importation of nightingales. Happily at Peking they declined to flourish ; there we have only a lesser and more piano sort, which it is an Imperial amusement at certain times of the year to catch off the trees with long bamboo rods tipped with bird-lime. The Chinese certainly find pleasure in what are to us very disagreeable noises. Fancy a flight of pigeons with Æolian harps tied to their tails! The first time I heard it above my head I thought something dreadful must be going to happen. However, that fancy has a practical side to it, for it keeps off the hawks which abound at Peking.

We have been revelling for two days in the very rare luxury of wet weather. What a pleasure a real rainy day is in this burnt-up climate! a day when the hills look as if they might be Scotch moors, and the temples and pavilions as if they ought to melt away and be

replaced by the clubs in Pall Mall. On these wet days we wander about our own place, of the size of which you may judge from the fact that one building alone contains Buddha and his five hundred Lo-hans, or saints of the third class, larger than life, just like the temple of which I told you at Canton, where, however, they are smaller; then whole courtyards are surrounded by buildings, in which heaven and hell are represented by hundreds upon hundreds of wooden dolls. The Buddhist heaven is a very queer place according to this view of it, where the height of happiness seems to consist in riding a tiger or griffin, or some equally uncomfortable mount; but hell is really too grotesque, especially the ladies' department, where the unfortunate women who have sinned in this world are to be seen experiencing what is, to say the very least of it, very inconsiderate treatment at the hands of a number of lavender-kid-glove-coloured fiends. In the gentlemen's department a favourite punishment is for sinners to have their heads cut off, and be compelled to walk about with them under their arms like a crush hat at a ball. No description of mine could give you any idea

of the absurdity and ugliness of the idols and dolls. I can't say that, so far as I can judge, any real respect is paid to them. The people seem to make sort of picnic parties here, quite as a matter of sightseeing, rather than of religion, just as some tourists visit cathedrals for their beauty and for the art treasures which they contain, and not as an act of worship. However, they call visiting a temple "Kwang Miao," which means to do an act of respect and worship, so perhaps some may attach a religious importance to it. The priests at our temple are a lazy, brutish lot, and rather inclined to be insolent. At Wo-Fo-Ssŭ they are far more respectable, and a man who was staying there told me that they had constantly choral service in the temple, especially at night; here I very rarely hear the bell and drum beat for prayers. I must do our priests the justice to say that one day I offered one of them a glass of wine, which their laws forbid, but their stomachs crave for, and he refused, although there was no one by to have told the tale, so I suppose they have a conscience somewhere and that they regard its pricks.

I am sorry to say that by being out here we

missed seeing the state funeral of the famous general San-Ko-Lin-Sin. He was carried all the way to Peking from Shantung, where he was killed, every mandarin on the road being bound to furnish men to bear his body. The Emperor pays the expense of his funeral and of his lying in state at Peking, and went himself to pour a libation before the coffin. San-Ko-Lin-Sin was a feudal Mongol prince, and his son has now been created a Wang, or prince. There are many people who say that the general was not killed by the rebels, but by his own troops. The account of his death, however, was given with great details, and he was probably killed fighting. "A corner of the Great Wall has gone," say the Chinese, in their picturesque way, when a great general is killed in battle.

LETTER X

PEKING, *24th July.*

No mail in—we are expecting it any minute, but have begun to fear that we must send off our bag before its arrival. I never saw anything so curious as the change which the last few wet days have caused in all the face of the country—its whole appearance is altered. What were before arid and desert patches of sand are now turned into green and luxuriant corn-fields—roads that were like dried water-courses, with six inches of dust lying on them and banks of sand on each side, are fresh English-looking lanes. The crops have sprung up to be so tall, that we could not see our usual landmarks, and lost our way; for the plain between Peking and the hills is so scarred and intersected by roads and paths, that one has to make straight for some point in the distance, or one is thrown out—all the houses

and groups of cottages are exactly like one another and afford no assistance in steering; it is a regular Chinese puzzle. The thermometer has fallen from 108° in the shade to 75°. Such a relief!—I hope that we have now got quit of the very great heat.

By the bye, in my last letter I spoke about Chinese doctors and prescriptions, and their doctrine of the hot and cold influences. My teacher has been telling me about their principles of diagnosis. It appears that they attach great importance to examining the tongue. Now if the tongue is white the patient is under the cold influence. If it is yellow, he is under the hot influence. If the centre of the tongue is white, and the edges yellow, he is under the cold influence inside, and his skin is under the hot—and so *vice versa*. Palmistry and the study of the face and features are also brought to bear upon medicine—certain conditions of feature portend certain events in the future. My teacher told me that he feared he should not be long-lived, because the lobe of his ear was small—a large lobe to the ear is much admired on all accounts, but specially as a

sign of wisdom, and Buddha and the other idols are represented with huge appendages. A soft hand is the sign of longevity; the eyes, nose and nostrils, and chin, all have certain prophetic meanings to those who are wise to read them. I told my teacher about phrenology—he was delighted with the idea, and stood open-mouthed while his bumps were being felt. His character, however, did not interest him much, but he was very anxious to know how long he would live, and whether he would hold an office of any kind.

We have no news.

LETTER XI

PEKING, *7th August* 1865.

THE extreme heat has left us at last, and the autumn has set in—a most charming season in this climate. It is a regular second spring—not such a spring as we are used to in England, which is a struggle for mastery between hot sun and chilling east winds, but a season in which the burnt-up vegetation literally *springs* into life again under the influence of quickening rain and warmth—the trees put forth shoots and tender green leaves, and the plain is one rich field of millet twelve feet high, through which one rides feeling like Gulliver in the farms of Brobdingnag. The rains have driven us out of our temple at the hills, which I much regret, but it had become untenable lately owing to damp; the scorpions, too, began to come into the house in too great numbers to be pleasant; five were killed in my room in two

days, besides other creeping things. There were quantities of lizards also in my house. The Chinese have an idea that lizards, which they call scorpion-tigers, kill the scorpions by making them commit suicide in this wise: the lizard touches the scorpion on the back with his tail, the creature strikes at him, but the enemy is too quick, and he stings himself instead; this is repeated until the lizard sees that the scorpion's poison is exhausted, when he goes at him at once and eats him. We rather exploded this theory, for we caught two scorpions and two lizards, and put them in a box with a glass cover, and the only result was that the large scorpion ate the smaller, continuing his cannibal feast during ten hours, and leaving nothing of him but the tip of his tail; so we let the lizards go and killed the scorpion, whom Shao-To, our head man, considered to have become doubly venomous as he must have the poison of two in him.

Before leaving the hills we took a great walk over all the summits in order to get a thorough idea of the country around. It looks as if the sea, now about 100 miles off, must once have washed the foot of the mountains,

forming bays, promontories, and headlands into the plain, which has the same appearance of being alluvial as that of Troy. The numberless watercourses which intersect it show that formerly there must have been a far greater flow of water towards the sea than is ever seen now, even in the rainiest season. From the highest peak we had a magnificent view of Peking, Yuen-Ming-Yuen, and the villages around, and behind us was another range of mountains, more wild, more rugged and picturesque than that on which we stood. It was raining slightly, and as we watched there came on one of the strangest atmospheric effects I ever saw. Between us and Peking there was a faint mist, while over the city itself a heavy cloud was hanging, partly black and partly lurid, with a sort of hellish glare about it that was perfectly indescribable. All around us there was a deep blue gloom; it was such a scene as Lot's wife may have looked upon.

We rode into town the day before yesterday, and made a circuit so as to take Yuen-Ming-Yuen, the famous summer palace, on our way. It was a new road to me, and a very pleasant one. We passed several Chinese villages,

principally composed of soldiers' barracks, like elongated cow-sheds, and one very pretty prosperous-looking little city. As we drew near the Imperial grounds the scenery became prettier and prettier; above all there were shady groves, which were doubly delightful for the scorching morning sun that was blazing upon us. Quaint stone and marble bridges were thrown over the dykes and water-channels, and little gables of pagodas, charged with the inevitable tile gurgoyles, peeped out of the woods at intervals.

Yuen-Ming-Yuen ("the round bright garden") is one of three parks containing Imperial palaces, two of which were destroyed in 1860. Some of the more out-of-the-way buildings in the third escaped notice and destruction. The name Yuen-Ming-Yuen has been wrongly given by Europeans to the whole, and still more wrongly to the only one of the three parks (the third park is called Yu-Chuan-Shan, or the "Hill of the Fountain of Jewels") that can be seen, and which we visited. The proper name of this is Wan-Shao-Shan, the "Hill of the Ten Thousand Longevities," which is a figure of speech for the fête day of the

Emperor or Empress. Of course it is against the orders of the Chinese authorities that this is shown, but the guardians of the place make a good profit out of it, and if they were caught they would always be ready with the excuse that "the barbarians forced their way in and would not be kept out."

We were ushered through a number of court-yards, where there was nothing to be seen but ruined and charred walls, and the ghosts of departed pine-trees, and along a pretty covered walk to a pavilion by the lake where we were to breakfast. It was a lovely spot. The lake is a mass of lotus plants now in full flower; there are quantities of little islands covered with trees and buildings. A number of boats with naked fishermen in them gave a touch of wildness and barbarity to the scene, and further added to our amusement; for one of the men, in the hopes of finding Heaven knows what small loot among the masses of rubbish where there is not so much as a tile left whole, had come on shore and was lying hidden among the ruins; whom when the guardians perceived, they set up such a game of hare and hounds, and such a throwing of stones and bad language,

as reminded me of Eton days when a boy from another house was found in my dame's without being able to give a good account of himself. When the brave men returned all panting and out of breath, they were very proud of themselves, and told us the story with much vigour and dramatic action, for it was a very valiant deed, as they were only three to one, "with power to add to their number."

There is nothing like a Chinese servant for a picnic or expedition of any kind, under whatever difficulties he may be placed. Shao-To never lets us lack for anything. Even Dan, the pointer puppy, had his usual mess of rice and broth, as if he had been at home. When we had breakfasted, with an admiring crowd around us, we went to explore the ruins. It is difficult to form any idea of what the palace must have been like, so complete has the work of destruction been. We scrambled up and down steep steps (that must have been hard work for the poor little cramped feet that trod them) and along terraces where the wild vines and creepers, and sweet-scented weeds, now grow in tangled masses; there is not a stone that has not been split

by the action of the fire. Two colossal marble kylins, of rare workmanship, are seared with cracks, and have almost fallen away in flakes. Of the great octagonal three-storied palace, not one stone lies on another, and a white marble balustrade alone shows where it stood. Higher up there are still a few remains untouched by fire. There is a little bronze temple, a perfect gem, which of course escaped, and two little revolving wooden pagodas full of small gods and images standing in a tower were also preserved; whilst above all a larger temple, built entirely of the yellow and green tiles I have so often described to you, shows what a blaze of glory the place must once have been. But that glory has passed away now, and so rapidly does ruin work in this climate, that soon even the little that remains to-day will perish. There is one very curious device thoroughly Chinese that I must mention. At the end of the terrace by the lake a sort of jetty stands out, built of huge blocks of stone, in the shape of a junk being launched into the lake, forty-one paces long by nine broad. Some of the rock-work is very quaint. When the Chinese come upon a quaintly-shaped rock or stone they

mount it on a pedestal and make an ornament of it. There are many very curious specimens at Wan-Shao-Shan.

With regard to the destruction of the summer palace, I believe that, politically speaking, it was a mistake. It was necessary that some great reprisal should be made for the outrages committed by the Chinese; but the destruction should have taken place inside the city, and not twelve miles off; for so ignorant are the large body of the Chinese of what passes outside their four walls, that there are many here in Peking who to this day believe that we had to pay an indemnity for leave to withdraw our troops, and that we are only here on sufferance. If this is the case in Peking, in the provinces people must be still further from the truth, and it is the policy of the Government to keep up the delusion. Had the Imperial palace in Peking been destroyed the matter would have been notorious to all, and its recollection would not have been blown away with the last cloud of smoke from Yuen-Ming-Yuen.

Here is some more Chinese doctoring which may amuse you. A boy was brought the other day to the hospital of the London Mission with

slight feverish symptoms. The doctor not being at home, the boy was taken by his parents to a Chinese practitioner, who prescribed a decoction of three scorpions, to be taken internally! The boy was well next day in spite of it.

A recipe for ophthalmia, posted on the walls of Peking, runs as follows:—Take three bright brass coins of the reign of Tao Kwang, boil them in water, and use the lotion. Here is our old saw, "A hair of the dog that bit you," worked in practice: For a dog bite, catch the dog, pull out a few of his hairs, and work them into a paste with a little lime and oil—apply the paste to the wound; of course, the lime acting as a caustic is the real remedy, but the hair is the one that is believed in.

The Legation is at present giving hospitality to a certain gentleman who is accredited by a small state to make a treaty with the Chinese, as he pompously announces "dans l'intérêt de la Chine même"; if he does not talk less big at the Tsung-Li Yamên, or Foreign Office, he will find the Chinese far less tractable than he seems to think it their duty to be; for they are much too sharp to suppose that anybody

comes out here to negotiate treaties in their interest without having a still keener eye upon his own; and as for themselves, of course the mandarins, at any rate, would rather return to the old state of things, have nothing to do with us and our treaties, and sacrifice the revenue that accrues to them from their customs. The pressure put upon them from abroad, and the counsels of Mr. Hart, the Chinese Inspector-General of Customs, and a very able man, alone keep them straight, and compel the central Government to assume responsibilities which they would rather leave to the provincial authorities. Fancy the difficulty of stirring up into action men whose highest idea of celestial happiness is an eternity passed in the contemplation of their own paunches, in the society of Buddha and his Lo-hans.

It is very hard upon our interpreters that they should have to do the work of other missions besides our own. These ministers of other states come up here without any staff whatever, and the whole of their business falls upon the Legation to whose good offices they may be intrusted.

LETTER XII

PEKING, *22nd August* 1865.

SINCE I last wrote to you we have been leading the most monotonous of lives, and no news from home has come to cheer us. We have had staying with us one of the few stray visitors that chance drives up here—a Mr. R——, an officer in the commissariat, and a very pleasant companion he was; he came fresh from Japan, and full of stories about Yokohama and Yedo, but out here we should prefer to hear about London. There really is little temptation to travellers to come here now, for, thanks to the misbehaviour of certain of our countrymen, the Chinese have shut up the principal lions of the town, and the temples of Heaven, and of Confucius, are not shown, even to members of the Legations. I for one have not been able to visit them. The great Lama Temple is still to be seen, and to any one who

has not seen a Chinese temple, is a great show ; but they are all very like one another, the main difference being merely a question of size. It is very provoking to be kept out of really interesting sights by the brutality of travelling bullies who will force their way into places where they have no right to go.

All we can do now for our visitors is to show them the panorama of the two cities from the walls, the top of which forms a ride or walk right round Peking, and where the wonderful observatory of the old Jesuit fathers, with its beautiful bronze instruments, still stands, and to take them through the streets and over the curio shops—braving offence given to eyes and nostrils. The curio shops especially make up an amusing day, and I am always glad of an excuse to go there. There is a bazaar, too, just inside the Chinese city, a sort of Lowther Arcade on a small scale, where toys, scents, sham jewellery, cheap embroidery, and other rubbish are sold, and which is quite worth seeing. This is greatly patronised by the Mongols, who never weary of admiring the showy trash exposed for sale. The Mongols are to the Pekingese what the Auvergnats are

to the *gamins de Paris*, or a bumpkin come up to London for the cattle-show to the cabbies and 'busmen. They are the perpetual butts of jokes, sells, and cheatery, and are done at every opportunity. The bazaar leads on to the Beggar's Bridge, with its mass of rotting humanity, a place that it makes one shudder to think of, and once past that we are well in the Chinese city. The amount of traffic is always very great, and it is no easy matter to thread one's way through the crowd of mules, carts, horses, and footpads, and the worst of it is that one is continually hustled up against some unhappy leper, whose only clothing is dirt and sores. The neatness and nicety of the shops are a great contrast to the filth and squalor of the streets themselves. Inside everything is as clean as water can make it; outside is a dunghill, where the beggars are disputing with the dogs and pigs the right to water-melon rinds, rotten vegetables, and dead carrion. The street hawkers are a great feature; of course they all have their peculiar cries as in Europe; but in addition to this each trade has its own announcement in the shape of some instrument—one trade carries a thing like a

huge Jew's harp, another has a tiny gong, a third a drum, a fourth beats two pieces of bamboo together, and so forth. All these make a terrible clatter, and the noise is increased by the beggars, who take up a position opposite some shop—a cook-house for choice—and there make themselves odious to eyes, ears, and nostrils until its owner can stand it no longer and buys them off with a copper cash or piece of refuse food. Among Chinese street characters the *improvisatore* is one of the foremost. He is as loud and fluent as his Italian compeer, and infinitely more energetic. He generally accompanies himself on the bones, but often has a little boy to beat a drum for him. He works himself into a regular frenzy, and jumps about like one possessed of a devil; he dances and gesticulates and raves until the sweat runs down his face; but nothing tires him, and he never halts nor pauses in his chant. These men are too nimble of speech and too slang for most foreigners to catch a word; but I suppose they are generally witty and entertaining, for they command immense audiences of gaping Chinamen, and their sallies are received with great delight. Like the Italians, when they have

worked up their audience to a proper pitch of interest they stop, and refuse to go on with the story without more coppers. At the approach of the foreign barbarian some little witticism is launched *à notre adresse*. You may judge whether it is very complimentary; however, as "it amuses them and don't hurt us," that don't much signify. Perhaps the hawkers whose wares are the most curious to Europeans are the men who carry about live crickets and cicalas for sale, either in tiny wooden cages or tied to bamboo rods. The Chinese buy them to any amount as pets, and some make the crickets fight like quails and game-cocks.

We are very often accosted by the more respectable class. The first salutation is always, "Have you had your dinner, sir?" which is the Chinese, "How d'ye do?" and then the conversation runs as follows:—

"Your honourable name?"

"My name is Mi. What is your honourable name?"

"My shabby name is Hwang. What are the years of your age?"

"I am twenty-eight" (great astonishment, for I pass usually for forty-five).

"How long have you been inside the walls?" (at Peking).

"About four months."

"Do you belong to the great Ying, or the great Fa?" (English or French).

Then follow a string of the most absurd questions about England. One man asked one day whether it was true that in Europe there were men with holes through their chests and backs, whom their servants carried about by passing a bamboo pole through the hole and so hoisting them on to their shoulders. Such is the Chinese education, that one of their scholars, deeply read in ethics and Confucian books, would be capable of asking questions to the full as ridiculous as the above, which, indeed, was put by an educated man.

After the din, bustle, and dirt of the streets, it is very refreshing to go into one of the shops, where there is always the civillest welcome, even though one may buy nothing. In almost all cases the master of the house gives us delicious tea, sugarless and milkless of course, but of the most exquisite flavour. The infusion is made in a small covered bowl; I have hardly ever seen a teapot. The outer shop is for the most

part only, as it were, an advertisement, and contains nothing but trash: one of the finest shops here exhibits to the street a front such as a Cheap Jack at a fair might show; but go inside, and cross a little courtyard into the inner sanctum, and you will be dazzled by the beauty of the ornaments and trinkets for sale. There is a certain black *étagère* made of ebony, carved to represent very light bamboo stems supporting irregular niches, filled with carved lapis-lazuli, jade, cornelians, agates, and other rare stones, that I should like to carry off bodily. Every piece in the collection is a *chef-d'œuvre.* The prices are, of course, outrageous, but they come down; indeed, it is curious that a people so proverbially cunning in trade should act as they do. Supposing that they ask thirty dollars for a thing, we offer fifteen, which, at first, will be indignantly rejected; but after perhaps three months of bargaining the man will come down to our price, thus keeping himself for three months out of the interest of his money. There is some beautiful porcelain, but very dear. I have never seen any of the rose-backed plates or cups that are so much prized at home; and two or three of the dealers, whom I have

asked about them, had never heard of such things. There is plenty of bad cloisonné enamel about; but the fine specimens came from Yuen-Ming-Yuen, and the Chinese were obliged to sell them off as fast as they could for fear of the law. (I take it the natives had a great hand in the looting.) I only know of two really magnificent pieces, for which the owner asks £1000! He would probably take £300, and they would be a great bargain at the price. They are two colossal covered bowls, without flaw or fault, and would look splendid at Windsor or some very great house. I have written to a friend to tell him of them.

The best chance of picking up here and there a pretty thing is in the minor shops, from which the bigger ones are recruited. There is a street called the Liu-li-chang, which swarms with old book shops (a sort of Paternoster Row) and curiosity shops, some of which are hardly more than stalls, where sometimes one may find a piece of fine porcelain, or other work of art, for an old song.

I start after to-morrow morning for Ku-Pei-Kŏu, to see the Great Wall, and I shall return by way of the tombs of the

emperors of the Ming dynasty; so at any rate I shall not have to sing the eternal refrain, "Peking is very dirty." I shall be about eight days gone. The trip was originally to have been undertaken with the Russian Minister, but he is detained by business, so I go with Murray, and we accompany Saurin as far as Ku-Pei-Kóu, whence he will travel into Mongolia, and Murray and I shall come back.

One more word about the Beggar's Bridge: often one of the poor creatures will die at his post, and I have seen the corpse lie there for two or three days hardly covered over by a piece of rotten matting. His troubles and miseries are over. The beggars are, I am told, a sort of guild with a recognised head, to whom it is not an infrequent custom to pay a slight annual tribute, by which means their importunities, such as taking up a position outside a man's door or shop, and refusing to "move on," may be avoided, and their piteous cry, "Kŏ Lien! Kŏ Lien!" (Have mercy! have mercy!) no longer heard. Begging throughout Asia is a fine art.

LETTER XIII

PEKING, *5th September* 1865.

I RETURNED on Saturday from my trip to the Great Wall; I must try and give you some account of it.

We started on the 25th August, as I told you before. Saurin and Frater, one of the student interpreters, were going to make a journey in Mongolia, and Murray and I accompanied them to the frontier.

Each party had three servants—a man to look after clothes, bedding, and things in general, a cook, and a groom; but besides these our people took with them *their* servant, a queer little oddity of a Chinaman, very dirty, in an old English sailor's pea-jacket, much too big for him, which earned him the name of the "Skipper." I never saw such a merry, willing little creature; he was always at work and always laughing, as if everything he did were a

capital joke, and the very fact of his being in the world at all something so ridiculous that he really couldn't get over it.

I need tell you little of our first day's journey, as far as regards scenery. I had never seen that part of the plain which lies north-east of Peking, but it is exactly like the rest, which I have often described to you. We breakfasted at a place called Sun-Ho, about thirteen miles hence; soon after that the country became prettier. We passed some cosy villages with fine old willows; from these one is called Ku-Lin-Shu, the "Old Willow Trees," and here we stopped to rest during the great heat of the day at the tea-shop. As usual, all the people were very civil and talkative. One elderly man, whose name was Ma, a Mohammedan, and evidently the village politician, was very communicative; he was a great Tory, and *laudator temporis acti*, abusing the present dynasty, and sighing over the "good old days" of the Mings. I gave him a cigar, which he took with great delight, and jumped up on to a little low wall, where he sat perched with his hams on his heels like an old bird, and went on with his denunciation of the Tartars. "Ugh!" said he, "they have not

got a good officer among all their mandarins. They brought us into the war with foreign powers, and then when they saw the big men and the big horses, and heard the poum-poum-poum of the cannon, what did they do? Why, they ran away and left us to pay for it all."

We slept at a place called Niu-Lan-Shan, near which there are some marshes with herons and wild-fowl. A Chinese inn is very unlike our notions of an inn. It is generally built round the four sides of a courtyard; the guests' house is at the bottom, facing north and south. East and west are stalls for mules, horses, and donkeys; the remaining side is occupied by the people of the house. The inn-yard is very animated—carts, pigs, horses, mules, dogs, flocks of pigeons, and poultry are crowded into it, besides poor travellers, Chinese and Mongol. Then there are generally a travelling barber plying his trade in one corner, a pedlar haggling for a few cash in another, and all the idle vagabonds who seem to comprise the greater part of the population of every place in Northern China, and who come in to loaf about and make remarks about the foreigners. There is no great variety or originality in these. There is always

a fugleman, who makes a remark, and then the crowd take it up in chorus. The following is really a fair specimen of the sort of thing they say about us :—

Fugleman—"Those boots! They are made of scented cow's leather" (Russia leather).

Chorus—"Those boots! They are made of scented cow's leather."

Fugleman—"Those boots! He that wears them need not fear water."

Chorus (admiringly)—"Those boots! He that wears them," etc.

Fugleman (to one of us)—"Those boots! How much did they cost?"

Englishman—"They cost fourteen taels."

Fugleman—"Those boots! They cost fourteen taels, and he speaks the mandarin language."

Chorus—They cost fourteen taels, and he speaks the mandarin language"—and so it goes on *ad infinitum.* If we are in a good humour we give the fugleman a cigar, which he puffs at vigorously, and swears "it is both strong and fragrant"; but it makes him cough violently, and he passes it on to the next in the crowd, until the whole of them retire, coughing

and declaring that it is "both strong and fragrant," into a corner, from which every now and then we hear "those boots" all over again.

The rooms of the inn are very bare indeed; the only furniture is a table with two chairs, and the only *vaisselle* provided is a teapot and bowls, all guests being expected to bring their own bedding, food, and comforts. On each door is pasted a print of a god in staring colours. The lintels and posts of the inner doors are covered with characters printed on red paper, which are generally moral reflections from the works of Confucius, such as, "All happiness comes from Heaven," "To become wealthy you must have the principle of right." On the wall is generally hung a picture. I saw one of a sage with a forehead like a misshapen pear, lecturing before two warriors upon the Yang and Yin (the universal principle of nature); another of a yellow elephant in spectacles, his body, legs, and trunk covered with characters, with two gentlemen in blue eating their dinner comfortably under his stomach, while a third was offering a stalk of millet to a lady in pink, who modestly turned her head

aside as she accepted the present; this was a sort of Chinese farmer's Moore's almanack, indicating the propitious times for sowing, reaping, etc. Besides the centre picture, the walls are often covered with drawings by poor travelling artists, who earn a night's lodging by the skill of their pencil. Some of their productions, when they don't attempt figures or beasts, are very clever. I have seen in the most out-of-the-way inns sketches of bamboo, grasses, flowers, and birds, that were dashed off in a way that would have done credit to well-known names. If the traveller be a poor scholar, as such are always proud of their calligraphy, he will, instead of a drawing, contribute quotations from the philosophers or poets, or a few verses in praise of the landlord and his honesty, and declaring how his (the poor scholar's) heart had laughed during the period of their intercourse. Every room has in it a kâng; this is a large stove about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, covered with a mat or piece of felt, taking up all one side of the room, and serving as a bed. In winter the Chinese, like the Russians, bake themselves every time they go to sleep.

There came on a fearful thunderstorm in

the night, with a deluge of rain, which gave us some uneasiness, as we had several rivers ahead of us which we feared might become unfordable, as indeed turned out to be the case. However, the only inconvenience we suffered was in loss of time, for when we arrived next morning at the first river we found huge ferry-boats, worked by strapping Chinamen stark naked; it took us nearly two hours to get our carts, mules, and horses across. We amused ourselves the while in watching a swine-herd's vain endeavours to make his flock swim the stream, the opposition being led by a stubborn little curly-tail, with a majority in his favour. The consumption of pork at Peking must be something fabulous. The streets swarm with pigs, and yet from every direction we saw large herds being driven into the town. The Chinese who can afford it eat pork at nearly every meal. We found an encampment of Mongols on the river-bank. They were on their way homeward from Peking, where they had been selling horses. They seemed very good-humoured, honest people, simple and primitive to a degree, as amused as children with our watches, clothes, saddles, and other belongings.

It is very strange, the farther one gets from the capital, to see an improvement in everything. The fields are better cultivated, the houses are better built, and the villages far cleaner than the town. Fifteen miles out of Peking all the indecencies and filthiness which are its characteristics disappear entirely; a man would be stoned if he were to venture upon outraging decency as the Pekingese do; the poor peasants are more polite and less inquisitive about us, although foreigners so rarely appear among them, which makes one think that the inquisitiveness is sometimes only studied impertinence. We saw several farmhouses with pretty gardens and neat out-houses, which might have stood in an English shire, so free were they from all stamp of China. The people seemed well-to-do, and the farmers positively rich. We met a lady going out to spend the day with her gossip, dressed as smart as a new pin, and carrying her baby in her arms. She was riding a donkey, which, as soon as one of our vicious little Mongol ponies set eyes on, he made a dash at the ass and upset him and the lady and the baby, happily on to a bank, for had she fallen in the muddy lane there would have

been an end to all her finery. As it was, she was let off for a good fright. "Ai ya! what manners are these! what manners are these!" she cried indignantly as she struggled on to her tiny goat's feet. We, of course, made all the apologies possible, and she bestrode her ass and rode off pacified—more or less.

The principal place that we passed on this day (August 26) was Mi-Yün-Hsien, a walled city. We did not enter the city, but skirted the walls. Outside the gate there stands a guard-house, and near this there is a tall blasted tree. It has neither leaf nor sprout, but from its whitened branches there hang small wooden cages, and in each cage is a human head, at which the carrion-birds are pecking. A ghastly fruit!

At a little place called Shi-ling I saw the prettiest woman I have ever met in China. She was a widow, and really looked quite lovely in her white dress and fillet, which she wore as weeds. She had a clear olive complexion, abundance of black hair, dark eyes, and regular features. Women's dress in this country show nothing of the figure; but we all agreed that she *must* have had a good figure;

alas! her feet had been tortured and deformed. This is commonly supposed to be the difference between pure Chinese women and Tartars. As a matter of fact, I am assured that it is a question of family custom, some Tartar families adopting it, while some Chinese families do not. The poor serving wench who has her feet deformed must be sadly hampered in her work.

We slept at Mu-Chia-Yu. The next morning (August 27) we started in good time, for we wished to reach Ku-Pei-Kŏu early that day. Although the ride of the day before had been very pretty, increasing in beauty as we drew near to the mountains, I was hardly prepared for such glorious scenery as we passed through on this day. The road lay over and between hillocks and rocks covered with ferns, mosses, and wild-flowers, and before us were the mountains with blue distances and fantastic outlines for a landscape-painter to revel in. Over the tops of the highest hills the Great Wall of China traced a zigzag course, like a distant chain. Rich crops of millet and Indian corn, with undergrowths of beans or buckwheat, bordered with the castor-oil plant, stood in the valleys and in the plain. The cottages of the different villages

had an air of comfort and tidiness rare in China; almost every one had a little flower-garden fenced in by a hedge of millet stalks, trailed over with gourds, convolvulus, and vines. In some places the people were gathering in the smaller sort of millet; they were cutting the ears separately with a small knife, as a gardener would gather a dish of fruit or vegetables.

The only instance of hostility towards a foreigner on the part of the people I have met with hitherto happened on this day. Frater and I were riding about 200 yards ahead of the party when, just as we arrived at a cross-road, and were doubting which way to take, up came a party of about a dozen Chinamen with a cart. We, according to good manners, "borrowed the light of their intelligence," and asked our way, which they pointed out, paying us at the same time the compliment of asking whether we had eaten our dinner. I think I told you that the common salutation is, "Have you had your dinner?" The literal translation of the phrase is, "Have you eaten rice."[1] *Rice* has

[1] This is the more curious, as rice is by no means the staple food of this part of China. It is bad and dear here, the common fare or staple of the people being millet—a poor food—to which they add much garlic for nourishment.

passed into the generic term for all meals. *Early rice* is breakfast, *late rice* is dinner. *The rice is prepared* is the equivalent of Mr. Bailey Junior's "the wittles is up." In short, amenity and deportment could be pushed no further. To our surprise a few moments after Saurin and Murray rode up looking hot and angry, and asking us whether we had had any difficulty with these same men. It appeared that, as Saurin was riding past the cart, the man inside, in the most unprovoked way, struck him in the chest with his brass pipe. Murray was riding just behind him and saw the blow struck, and from their account of what took place I doubt whether the man will ever insult a foreigner again. His friends all took part against him, but interceded for him, crying, "Be calm, be calm; he has had enough." At any rate he got a good whipping.

The sun was scorching hot, and it was a great relief to come upon a pretty village-green, at one end of which stood a small tea-shop, shaded by a covering of millet-straw and by a broad-spreading tree: our horses needed a rest as much as ourselves; they had been driven nearly mad by the flies and by one venomous

little insect in particular, which must have been the original gadfly that persecuted Io. It has a long sheath in its tail, out of which it shoots a sting into the horses' flanks, apparently out of pure mischief, for it never seems to suck them, and it follows a horse or mule for miles. If one attacked our horses, the only way to get rid of it was to dismount and kill it. So sharp is its sting that every time it touched our beasts they jumped up as if they had been shot. We were all glad of a friendly shelter.

We found a party of Chinamen playing dominoes. They were playing the game more as we do cards than dominoes, but I could not make out the principle of it. The landlord was a very jolly, burly fellow, the picture of a host with whom everything prospered, although he must have been poor enough, for instead of tea he was drinking an infusion of dried leaves of jujube that is common on the hills. In some places where there is no tea to be had the people drink a sort of barley water, and very good it is. At these tea-shops guests are expected to bring their own tea-leaves. The house supplies only the pot and the boiling water.

Almost every man and woman (I am not exaggerating) that we met in this part of the valley had goitres, not so bad as those one meets in the Swiss valleys, but far more numerous. In one village we saw eight full-grown men and women only—out of the eight seven had goitres.

Overlooking the village-green I mentioned above is a fort commanding the plain; and on one side of the fort the road has been cut through the solid rock and arched over with strong masonry, so as to form a gate, which bears the legend, "The Gate of the Southern Heavens." Through this gate there is a most gorgeous view of the different ranges, the Great Wall, and the approach to Ku-Pei-Kòu.

Ku-Pei-Kòu is in its way one of the most strikingly beautiful places that I have ever seen. The valley by which it is reached, with rocks, ferns, mosses, gardens, and a little rivulet sparkling in the sunlight, is a gem. The town itself stands in a little nest among the hills which surround it; on one side of it runs a river, on the farther bank of which, in a grove of trees, is the yamên or official residence of the Ti-tu (the general officer commanding the district).

There is not a point in the whole place from which there is not something attractive to rest one's eyes on. The streets are clean, the houses well built, and the shops seem to do a prosperous business. At one end of the town is the frontier gate of China; it is strongly guarded, and ingress or egress without passport is forbidden. Besides the walls of the city, as a guard against Mongol tribes, on the river side are two little ditches that a man might easily hop over, and two little pieces of cannon which look more dangerous to friend than to foe. We walked outside the gate to stand beyond the confines of China proper. The guard were extremely civil, the sentry politely inviting us into the guard-room to drink tea! The Chinese attach a great deal of importance to Ku-Pei-Kŏu as a border fortress. They keep up a garrison of two thousand men, of whom ten per cent are Tartars and the rest Chinese.

The inn here is the largest I have been in yet. The enormous traffic which passes through the town keeps its business brisk. The landlord was a Tientsing man, and a man of letters, having taken the degree equivalent to our B.A. Degrees in China are conferred by competitive

examination, only a certain number of candidates being elected each time. The examinations are held at Peking, and people come from all parts of the empire to compete. Some time back an old gentleman aged 100 presented himself from the south for examination. He received the degree of B.A. by Imperial favour, and with it a present of 2 lbs. of gin-seng, which is a powerful aphrodisiac and tonic. It is from the successful candidates that the offices of the empire are filled, and in former days it was the highest ambition of a Chinaman to pass the schools in order to qualify himself for office. Now, however, a race has sprung up of men who are indifferent to public honours, and prefer their private advantage. Of these was our host. Why, he argued, should he go through all the petty annoyances and humiliations which inferior mandarins suffer at the hands of their superiors for the possible chance of rising to distinction, when he could enjoy certain comfort in trade? Many people deny the existence of this feeling among the lettered class, but it exists nevertheless. Office, both civil and military, can also be obtained by purchase.

As I was sitting smoking and reading an old

number of a magazine outside my room, the landlord came up and began asking me many questions about what I was reading, and why we read from left to right instead of in columns from right to left. About half an hour after I heard him in the inn-yard delivering a lecture to an admiring audience of grooms, muleteers, and riffraff, upon the English language, the point of which was that we wrote exactly as the Manchus do, who write in columns from left to right! Seeing me come he borrowed my book and proceeded to give practical illustrations of what he had said, holding it upside down. This exhibition of learning was received with awe by the gaping crowd. He was a great character, this same landlord, a confirmed opium smoker, and being a man of letters, which is something more thought of here than being of good birth is in Europe, he had an immense number of friends and acquaintances of good standing of whom he was very proud. He took me into his own little house, which he had papered completely with the crimson visiting-cards of his intimates.

Our first object at Ku-Pei-Kŏu was to get the seal of the Ti-tu affixed as a *visa* to our

passports. All over the provinces of China the central authorities count as nothing in comparison with the local; a small mandarin who would laugh to scorn the seal of the Imperial Foreign Office will bow to the earth before that of his immediate superior. Accordingly, on the evening of our arrival we sent our Shao-To, the apostle, to the Yamên with our cards to beg the Ti-tu to grant us his seal. He came back discomfited, not having been able even to see an official of any rank. The next morning, however, he proposed to return to the charge, and arraying himself in his best, with his head shaven and his tail freshly plaited, he ordered out one of the carts and called upon the skipper to attend him. Here arose a difficulty: our servants all declared that the skipper must abandon his old pea-jacket as unbefitting the dignity of the situation; he as firmly stuck to wearing it, but public opinion was too strong for him, and he was forced to give up his favourite garment and appear in a dirty nankin jacket. In spite of the imposing splendour of this embassy it was fruitless, the authorities declaring that they had received no special

instructions from Peking, and that without them they could not grant the seal. This was very provoking; the seal was necessary to us, we had a right to ask for it, and we were determined to have it, the more especially as if we, holding an official position here, had foregone our rights, other travellers would necessarily have had double difficulty in obtaining it in future. Murray determined to go himself and demand to see the Ti-tu. He was shown into a dirty room full of soldiers, and the Chinese tried to foist a wretched white-buttoned mandarin upon him as the Ti-tu. He of course was not to be taken in by this childish piece of chicanery, and as soon as it became evident that he knew what he was about the big doors were thrown open, and he was ushered with due solemnity into the presence of the Ti-tu, who made many apologies for having kept him waiting, and received him with much ceremony. Murray had the satisfaction of being served with tea and sweetmeats by the very impostor who had tried to pass himself off as the great man! About the question of putting on the seal the Ti-tu fenced for a long while. He had no orders. He

might get into a scrape. What right had we to ask it? Murray explained the treaty to him, and he admitted our claim. But no sooner were the passports produced than he raised another objection. The seal of the British Legation was in the centre, that of the Imperial Foreign Office on the left, and there was no more room on the left of that again for his seal—what could be done? His rank was too high for his seal to be placed below. "Well," said Murray, "put your seal on the right of ours, and then we shall be figuratively between the protection of the civil and military authorities of China." This little bit of nonsense was the very thing to please the Chinese mind, and the seal was set without more delay, Murray undertaking to explain the matter at Peking. "I know you'll do it," said the Ti-tu, "for when an Englishman promises a thing he does it."

I mention this to show you how business is transacted in China. The most important affairs are conducted with the same amount of childishness and trickery as our little passport difficulty with the Ti-tu of Ku-Pei-Kŏu, who, be it recollected, is an officer of the highest rank.

We spent the afternoon on the Great Wall. The Chinese name for this most marvellous work is Wan-Li-Chăng-Chĕng—literally the myriad-li-long wall. Calculating the li at a third of a mile, this name would give it a length of nearly 3400 miles, but the English books estimate it at 1250 miles. It was built by the Emperor Shih of the Chin dynasty about 230 years B.C. as a barrier against the northern tribes, or more probably as an evidence of power. He was the same Emperor who burnt the books of the sages, thus rendering himself famous by two works—one of construction, the other of destruction. The wall near Ku-Pei-Kŏu is for the most part in very good repair, but in other places it is little more than a heap of rubbish; where we saw it, it is built of large blocks of granite, huge bricks and cement, and the centre filled in with rubble and concrete. It is some fifteen feet broad and twenty feet high; at regular intervals are quadrilateral towers about forty feet high, built of granite with embrasures —some of these are quite perfect, others in ruin; wild vines, asparagus, bluebells, low shrubs, and other plants grow in profusion among the débris, and the towers are covered

with silver-backed ferns and mosses. For miles and miles as far as our eyes could stretch, up hill and down dale, up precipices almost perpendicular, and over the highest peaks, we traced the course of the wall; when we thought we had fairly lost sight of it our glasses would light on some distant crag carrying it on still farther. How so much material could have been got together in such wild and inaccessible spots is a marvel.

Even without the attraction of the Great Wall, the height on which we stood would have been well worth visiting. Range above range of hills rose all round us; on one side were the wilds of Mongolia, on the other the plains of China. At our feet lay the little town with its absurd fortification and ditches and cannon, and the river flowing past it. The mountain view was only bounded by the limits of our sight.

We lingered long on the wall, looking and wondering at the beauty of the scene. We gathered some ferns and mosses, of which I send you some, and by dint of hardish work, for it was no light weight to carry under a broiling sun, I managed to bring off a trophy

in the shape of one of the big bricks. I have got it safe in my room here, after many vicissitudes, for it was often nearly left behind, and some day I hope to take it home.

We left Ku-Pei-Kŏu the next morning, going our several ways—Saurin and Frater to Mongolia, Murray and I to the Tombs of the Mings, which I must tell you about in another letter.

As you interest yourself about Chinese curiosities and antiquities, I will add a few words about the Yang and Yin, to which I alluded in the early part of my letter.

You may have noticed on old porcelain and other ornaments this device. It is the symbol of Yang and Yin, the universal male and female principle of creation to which everything is referred. The celestial principle is male, the terrestrial female; even plants are male and female, without reference, of course, to the sexual system of Linnæus; odd numbers are male, even numbers female. Day and the sun male, night and the moon female. Parts of the body, the lungs, the heart, the liver, etc., each have a sex. Sir John Davis compares with this the Egyptian and Brahmin mythologies (*The Chinese*, vol. ii. p. 67).

LETTER XIV

PEKING, 25*th Sept.* 1865.

IN my last letter I told you how we went to Ku-Pei-Kŏu. We turned homewards (that I should talk of Peking as home!) on the 29th of August. I began my backward journey unluckily. My horse had a sore back, which no nostrum in the pharmacopœia of a dirty old Chinese veterinary surgeon could heal in time for me to ride him, so I had to go in a cart. Our first day's journey was back over the road by which we had arrived as far as Mi-Yün-Hsien, a distance of five-and-thirty miles—no great things, to be sure; but the average pace was three miles an hour; the road was full of deep ruts, and rendered doubly uneven by rocky passages and big stones. The carts have no springs; at every jolt I was banged up against the hard sides, and by the evening my back was as sore as my horse's. After ten hours of

a Chinese cart a man is fit for little else than to be sold at an old rag and bone shop. Misfortunes never come single; when I arrived at Mi-Yün-Hsien, jaded and aching in every bone, the inns refused to take us in; this was of very small account, for persuasion and threats soon brought the people to reason. The only cause they had to give for their reluctance to house us, was that last year some foreigners had stayed there, and instead of paying for their night's lodging had beaten the landlord when he asked for his money; such are some of the travellers who come to these parts, and who defeat all our efforts to conciliate the people. However, we convinced the host that we neither wished to cheat nor to beat him, and he, when he felt safe on both scores, was willing enough to be civil. But during the altercation, which had attracted a great crowd, my pocket-book was picked out of my pocket, which was a serious loss, for it contained a heap of notes, rough sketches, and plans, that I had made on different excursions, and our passport. We offered a reward for its recovery, and sent to the Chihsien, or governor of the town, to ask his help, which he sent in the shape of two officers, who

came and knelt before us very humbly, but offered no suggestions for getting back my book, which I shall now certainly never see again.

We had two days' journey from Mi-Yün-Hsien to Chang-Ping-Chou. As the road lay on one side of the highway, the villages were smaller, poorer, and more insignificant than any we had come to yet. By the richness of their crops, the people here ought to be among the most prosperous, but they are so taxed by the Government, and bled by the mandarins, small and great, that they have no chance. Wherever we went the people were complaining of their hard lot; nor was this mere talk, for since our return to Peking there has been a serious outbreak not far from the part of the country that we had travelled over. The insurrection, if it deserved the name, has been happily quelled, but not before the rioters had done great damage, making themselves masters of two small towns; and it was even said that they had killed the governor of one town, but this was afterwards contradicted. The affair was merely an additional proof of the tyranny of the petty rulers, and the hatred with which the people regard them. "A town priest and a country

mandarin" are the types of good luck, says the proverb; for the one is the darling of the women, the other can feather his nest handsomely.

It is very curious in this country to come upon roadside shrines just like those one sees in the "pious Tyrol" and other Roman Catholic countries. Those which are erected in honour of the goddess of mercy, Kwang-Yin, with a babe in her arms, or the Queen of Heaven, Tien-Hou, are the very counterpart of the effigies of the Madonna and Bambino. The majority of these shrines are faced by a low whitewashed blank wall. This often is covered by an allegorical design of great quaintness, in which the dragon plays a prominent part. The dragon is the principle of good, and he is engaged in constant warfare with the serpent or the tiger, who represent the principle of evil. These battles are a common subject for the decoration of the blank walls of shrines. Apropos of the dragon and serpent, the Chinese have a quaint superstition. They believe that thunderstorms are created by the dragon pursuing the tiger or serpent through the air, hurling bolts and fiery darts at him. It is very dangerous to stand at open

windows or in an exposed place during a thunderstorm, for the serpent and tiger are very crafty, and have cunning ways of dodging the dragon's shots, which thus fall on an innocent head. The tiger, who is drawn as a vicious-looking cat, with his back up, lives to a great age; when he has attained his thousandth birthday, he throws off his teeth and puts on a pair of horns. The existence of such fables is not to be wondered at, for there are old women's tales everywhere; what is delightful here is that some of the educated men really believe in them.

Chang-Ping-Chou was the scene of the great tragedy of 1860, the death of the English prisoners from the effects of the barbarities of their captors. It is a singular fact that the only one of the mandarins connected with those murders who is still alive has been disgraced and banished. The others have died miserably; one was executed in gaol for contumely to the Empress, on the very day on which, expecting his pardon, he had invited his wives and family to go to the prison and fetch him away; another was killed, as it is said, by his own soldiers. The retribution has been complete.

The Sikh soldiers who survived the cruelties to which they were subjected, and who gave the account of what had happened, described Chang-Ping-Chou as a walled city as big as Tientsing; but this is a mistake; it is a small walled city, very prettily situated with hills on three sides of it; on the top of one of these is a temple which the Sikhs mistook for a fort, as they easily might. The little town looks prosperous enough, and appeared to be doing a brisk trade in coffins (I never saw so many in any one place in my life) and the water-tight wicker-work buckets, which are to my mind the most ingenious production of North China.

The Shih-san-Ling, or thirteen tombs of the Ming dynasty, are about five miles distant from Chang-Ping-Chou. It was the burial-place of those emperors of the dynasty who reigned after the removal of the seat of the Empire from Nanking to Peking. The first sign that we were approaching something remarkable was a magnificent stone gateway, built of enormous blocks of stone and standing isolated in the midst of the plain. This gateway is the finest specimen of Chinese architecture that I have seen. Some way beyond this is a second gate-

way of brick, roofed with the imperial tiles, also very handsome, and this leads to a large square granite building, cruciform inside, containing a colossal marble tortoise, from whose back springs a marble tablet of great height, bearing an inscription on both sides, the one relating how the tombs were built by the Ming dynasty, the other how they were restored in the reign of Chien-Lung. This building is surrounded by four triumphal columns. Next follows an avenue of colossal figures in marble, — grim sentries over the approach to the sepulchres. The figures come in the following order: — Two lions sitting, two lions standing; two chi-lings (a fabulous beast which appears once in ten thousand years, and was last seen at the birth of Confucius. Chi-ling is the same as kylin, which we in England misapply to designate the porcelain and bronze lions with curly manes which are imported; these latter are called by the Chinese shih-tszŭ; as you have a pair, I thought this might interest you), two chi-lings sitting; two camels sitting, two camels standing; two elephants sitting, two elephants standing; two scaled beasts with wings and wreathed in flames sitting, two of the same standing; two

horses standing, two horses resting; two warriors in full armour, prepared for battle, with breast-plates that reminded one of Medusa's head, and carrying swords and maces; two warriors in repose, their swords sheathed and their hands crossed on their breasts; four councillors in their caps and robes of office; four chamberlains. We passed through this mysterious assemblage, which was very terrifying to our horses, and then had about a mile and a half to go along a ruined stone road, with decayed stone and marble bridges, before we got to the tombs. Each tomb is of itself a palace. The thirteen stand in an amphitheatre of hills among groves of cypresses and persimmon trees. The tombs are about three-quarters of a mile apart. The plain is cultivated now, but evidently it was originally intended that the whole place should be silent, solitary, and secluded. Nothing can be more beautiful than the situation. As I told you once before, in this country the fairest spots are chosen for burying the dead, and you may suppose that the emperors of the magnificent Ming dynasty would not be behind their people in this.

The tomb which is generally visited by

strangers, and which I saw, is that of the Emperor Yung-Lo; it is the oldest and *par excellence* "the Great Tomb." The Emperor Tae-Tsung, who reigned under the style of Yung-Lo, was the third of his dynasty; he reigned during the first quarter of the fifteenth century. It was he who moved the capital from Nanking to Peking. Of the thirteen emperors of his dynasty who succeeded him, twelve are buried round him; the thirteenth, who, when Peking was taken by the rebels, committed suicide in his harem after killing his wives and children, with the exception of one daughter, is missing.

The Tomb-Palace is, of course, surrounded by a high red wall tiled with yellow, the imperial colours. A broad and handsome entrance gate leads into a large courtyard; on the right is a pavilion containing a marble tortoise carrying a high marble slab with a commemorative inscription. Past this court is a vast entrance hall. Two flights of steps lead up to the hall, and between them is a slant of marble richly carved and ornamented; I believe that this centre path is for the good spirits to walk along. A second

courtyard contains two beautiful little yellow shrines, both empty. A triple terrace of marble, with steps and slants as before, precedes the grand hall, a most imposing chamber. It is 81 paces long by 36 broad, and very lofty. The floor is of black marble, the walls a dull yellow; the roof, which is fretted and painted like cloisonné enamel with dragons and other emblems, is supported by thirty-six huge masts of wood, smoothed but unpolished, and all of equal size. They are marvellously handsome, and in this country (where wood is so precious that an empty house is not safe for a night from thieves, who will strip it of roof, doors, and windows) must have cost something prodigious. In the centre of the hall is rather a mean shrine in honour of "our ancestor canonised under the name of Wên." Every emperor passes through three names. First he has his own name, which, after he ascends the throne, is never used nor borne again, for he then assumes the style of his reign, and at his death is canonised under a third. So this Emperor's name was Tai-Tsung; he reigned under the style of Yung-Lo, and was finally canonised as Wên. After this grand hall

come two more courtyards; in one of these stands a great sacrificial altar of stone and marble. The top block of marble is eight paces long; on this altar are placed the five gifts—an incense-burner, two candlesticks, and two pots of fruits. Inside the altar is a tank of fresh water, which is got at by passing a stick with a piece of linen attached to it as a sponge through a hole in the side. This water is a specific for certain complaints. The last building is a high tower, with a vaulted passage springing off into two directions. I never heard such an echo as this produced; we two, as we walked along, made a noise like that of a regiment. From the top of the tower, which contains a large perpendicular slab of marble painted red, there is a beautiful view over the country, with the thirteen palaces of the dead each in its niche in the hills; it is really a scene of rare and striking beauty. Just behind the tower is an artificial mound covered with trees and verdure; this, I believe, is where the body lies—a few old bones to all this magnificence. There is a Chinese proverb which says, "Better be a living beggar covered with sores than a dead emperor."

As we were sitting over our dinner at the inn we both agreed that as it was a lovely moonlight night we would go back at any rate as far as the avenue of colossal statues. I never saw anything so weird as the big beasts and warriors looked; they almost seemed to move in the moonlight—one half expected one of them to come down from his pedestal, like the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and punish us for the intrusion. It is impossible to imagine a wilder or more lonely spot; it is really the solitude of the tomb.

The next morning at daybreak we rode into Peking, about 25 miles. I have seen nothing so interesting since I have been in China as the scenes of which I have tried to give you an idea.

LETTER XV

PEKING, 25*th October* 1865.

I WHO so lately wrote to you about blazing sun and scorching heat am now glad to nestle into the chimney-corner and watch the "pictures in the fire." Outside, the rain is falling fitfully and the wind blowing a hurricane; it moans and howls dismally through the courts and cranky buildings of the Legation, piercing its way into all sorts of odd nooks, and routing out old bells that jangle in a harsh and discordant way from the quaint eaves, as if they were angry at being disturbed in their dusty dens. Doors are creaking and timbers groaning in every direction, and the windows threaten to burst in, but the stout Corean paper holds good, though it gets stretched and flaps unpleasantly like loose sails in a calm, and on the whole I confess I prefer glass. Every now and then, as the storm abates for a while, I hear the tap, tap, tap, of the

watchman's bamboo as he goes his rounds, and can't help grunting with Lucretian satisfaction as I look at my fire and think of how cold he must be. In short, we are working gradually into winter. In another fortnight the trees will all be bare, and Peking, throwing off the green clothes which it puts on in summer, in order to delude stray visitors into the idea that it is a pretty place, will stand naked, dirty, and ashamed. The last month has been very pleasant—neither too hot nor too cold; and the early morning rides, before wind or dust has arisen, and when the evil smells of the town, which are beaten down by the night dews, have not had time to assert themselves again, put fresh life into us after the great heats. I have got a new horse. The first one which I bought in the spring turned out to be possessed of every vice to which horse-flesh is heir; so I sold him at a loss, after he had bored my life out for four months, and am now well mounted on a first-rate Mongol cob.

Talking of horses leads me to dogs. I have had a sad loss in my little dog Nou-nou, of whom I was very fond. I told you what a little Turk he was, always getting himself into

scrapes about his amours. Well, the other day he had some words with a big dog belonging to the sergeant of our escort, which ended in his getting a bite in the back that broke his spine and killed him. Everybody in the Legation regrets him, poor little beast; he had been at Peking ever since the foreign Legations first came here, and was quite a character about the place. I was very much grieved at his death.

We have been interested lately in the steps taken by the Russian Government to establish a telegraph from Kiachta to Peking and Tientsing. The Russians wish that it should be a Chinese enterprise, but that they, the Russians, should set it up and help in working it. Accordingly, they have sent an officer of engineers here with a complete apparatus to show the Chinese Government. It is set up in the gardens of the Russian Legation. Some four years ago, when Baron Gros returned to Europe, he sent out to the Prince of Kung a present of an electric telegraphic apparatus. Such was the horror which the Chinese then had of innovations, that the Prince not only refused to accept it, but even to see it. Now,

however, the Government is more ripe for taking impressions from abroad. The members of the Foreign Office, and afterwards the Prince, have been to see the machine work, although the Prince took good care not to allow that his visit had any special purpose, and with that view went the round of all the Legations the same day. He watched the working of the telegraph without showing any great astonishment or perception of what was going on; but a few days afterwards M. Vlangaly, the Russian Minister, who had drawn up for the Prince a paper upon the subject of the international utility of telegraphs, received a very satisfactory despatch from the Foreign Office to the effect that one visit was not enough to enable the Ministers to appreciate so wonderful an invention, and that they hoped to be allowed to see it again. M. Vlangaly has had the happy idea of having some intelligent Chinese lads taught to work the telegraph, so next time the Prince comes he will see that his own people can learn to send off and take down messages. This is all a great step in advance. The French, who are always on the look-out to find that other Powers are extending their "influence,"

as they call it, and in this case have the additional motive for jealousy in the refusal of Baron Gros' present, look upon this move of the Russians with great distrust and dislike. We, on the contrary, are all for supporting any Power who will help the Chinese to move forwards. The superstitions of the people would be a great difficulty in the way of carrying out telegraphs, railroads, or any great engineering project in China. They would view with the utmost horror anything which might disturb places deemed sacred, lucky, or unlucky. They have a regular system for determining propitious places, manners of building, and the like. This they call "Fêng Shui," the wind and water system, and it is universally believed in. No Chinaman, however educated, would inhabit a new house without ascertaining that it fulfilled all the requirements laid down in the books which treat of "Fêng Shui." Some time ago one of our men was ill; our chief teacher, a man of great learning as Chinamen go, said quietly to Wade that it must be owing to a new chimney which had been built opposite to the sick man's room, but about a hundred and fifty yards off. Any work which

might be undertaken here must be carried out with all respect to the "Fêng Shui," or it would run the risk of being destroyed. Graves and other sacred places must also not be interfered with. In carrying any engineering project into execution, the best plan would be for the engineer to lay down his line and employ Chinese experts in such matters to see how nearly it could be followed.

I have rather a good story to tell you. One of our subjects of complaint at the Chinese Foreign Office has been our being insulted in the streets of Peking by the riffraff of the place. Their means of annoyance is to howl out "Kwei-tzŭ" (devils) after us when our backs are turned, and then, of course, to look as if they had not done it. Well, the other day M. de Mas, the Spanish Minister, being about to leave Peking, exchanged compliments p.p.c. with all the members of the Foreign Board. Amongst them all Hêng-Chi distinguished himself by his *empressement*, sending M. de Mas a magnificent dinner *à la Chinoise*. M. de Mas went to thank him, and after the two old gentlemen had exchanged banalities to their hearts' content, the Spaniard knowing that Hêng-Chi

had a little son, the child of his old age, of whom he was inordinately proud, thought it would be a very pretty compliment if he asked to see the little boy, who was accordingly produced, sucking his thumb after the manner of his years. Him his father ordered to pay his respects to M. de Mas—that is to say, shake his united fists at him in token of salutation, instead of which the child, after long silence and much urging, taking his thumb deliberately out of his mouth, roared out "Kwei-tzŭ" at the top of his voice and fled. Imagine the consternation of the two old twaddles! Hêng-Chi was horrified, for after all his protestations of friendship to us, which by the bye took nobody in, it bored him not a little that we should find out that his child was brought up in the privacy of his harem to look upon us as devils.

A French missionary has been murdered in the province of Ssŭ-Chuan, in the extreme west. It is said that there are 800,000 Christians in the province. There have been persecutions and disturbances on their account of late, and the Government of Peking will have to take very active steps in the matter, or the French will be down upon them. The central Govern-

ment are always slow in punishing their provincial authorities, whom they fear; and in this instance they will be the more reluctant, as the governor of the province is a man who has done them good service as an administrator.

We hear rumours of reforms in China. If the present dynasty is to be preserved and China to remain independent, they must be brought about quickly, for the moment is critical. Nothing can be more rotten and corrupt than every branch of the administration, nothing can be more faithless than the conduct of the Chinese towards foreigners. With misery and discontent at home, and angry reclamations for breaches of treaty from abroad, the Government are beginning to tremble for their existence. If the remedy does not come soon it will be too late.

LETTER XVI

PEKING, *5th November* 1865.

I WAS awakened this morning by such a noise of squibs, crackers, petards, maroons, bombs, cannon, and all manner of fireworks, that I rubbed my eyes and was half inclined to fancy that some good fairy had transported me back to England, where Guy Fawkes' day was being celebrated on a scale of unprecedented splendour. Not, however, that fireworks are a matter of astonishment here—they are going on at all hours of the day and night; our opposite neighbour, the Prince of Su, is continually letting off pieces which, to judge from the noise they make, would make the bouquet at Cremorne look very foolish. Fireworks and sweetmeats are the favourite dissipation of the Pekingese; the ladies especially take great delight in them, burning and sucking away immense sums. To-day Peking out-

heroded itself: never was heard such a fizzing, cracking, popping, and banging; for this is the seventeenth day of the ninth moon, and although the Gunpowder Plot was never heard of here, and if it had been would not have produced any extraordinary sensation, still it is an occasion upon which every devout and proper Chinaman is bound to burn as many squibs as he can afford, or more; for the seventeenth day of the ninth moon is the birthday of a certain little pousa or god, by name Tsai-shên. Now this little god is a very great little god, being intimately connected with tradespeople, and especially with their profits; and as tradespeople here are very numerous, and all have a natural weakness for profits, a great many crackers and squibs are expended to do this little god honour and service—of course *à titre de revanche;* moreover, scraps of paper upon which are written or printed characters of good omen are burnt and scattered to the winds. Furthermore, this little god having been during his lifetime on earth connected with the Mohammedan religion, it is also a matter of decency to eat and invite him to eat mutton all day, for pork would evidently be an insult to him,

while beef would be a deep personal affront to Buddha, but mutton satisfies all parties, including the eaters, provided that they have enough of it. I have mentioned this because it seemed to me noteworthy that at the two ends of our hemisphere the same day should this year be from different causes celebrated somewhat in the same way.

The little Emperor leaves Peking to-day for the Tung-Ling, the tombs of the emperors of this dynasty. He goes to place his father's coffin in the tomb which has been prepared for it, and which has taken four years to build. It is a great state occasion. The Emperor will be accompanied by the Prince of Kung, and all the court and chief ministers, with the exception of Wên Hsiang, who is the real Minister for Foreign Affairs. He remains to take charge of the capital. I shall be able to tell you nothing about the procession, for on these occasions the members of the Legations receive an official notification not to show themselves in certain streets between certain hours. Indeed, the whole thing is conducted within the city with as much secrecy and mystery as the Princess Badroulbadour's procession to the bath in the

Arabian Nights; shops are closed and shutters put up, and the streets are cleared along the line of march, for there is no saying what harm might happen to the state if a citizen of Peking were to catch a glimpse of the outside of the chair in which his Emperor is being carried. The consistency of the Chinese in this as in other matters is remarkable, for once the cavalcade is outside the city walls any lout may go and gape at it. The public gains one advantage from these Imperial progresses. The roads over which His Majesty is to pass are repaired, for it would never do for Imperial bones to be shaken and Imperial eyes offended by such roads as are good enough for "the hundred names" (which is the Chinese expression for the common people).

The Chinese-Mesopotamian treaty was signed on the 2nd instant, and I must say that the Chinese come uncommonly well out of the affair. They had already concluded a treaty with Mesopotamia at Shanghai, and had received no notification that the King of that country had refused to ratify it, when all of a sudden a gentleman appeared this summer announcing himself as plenipotentiary sent by

the King to conclude a treaty, nothing being said of the former one. The Chinese, after some discussion, named two plenipotentiaries, and offered M. T—— his choice of any existing treaty. He, however, said, "A quoi bon envoyer un négociateur s'il ne doit pas négocier," and sat down to compose a treaty on the principle of an amateur opera, out of four others. However, as the history of the treaty would not amuse you, it is enough to say that the Mesopotamian showed himself to be *plus Chinois que les Chinois*, while the Chinese exhibited a pliability and a willingness to accept innovations which took us all by surprise. The treaty is an affair of very small consideration; there has occasionally been a Mesopotamian ship seen in the Chinese seas, and there is one Mesopotamian subject in China who was declared bankrupt during the negotiations. But the conduct of the Chinese, as showing a desire to amend in their foreign policy, is of the last importance to us. They have shown in these negotiations that they have read their translation of Wheaton's *International Law* with profit, and they have departed from old precedents in a way which

was enough to make the old conservatives' tails stand on end.

The great difficulty with the Chinese has been their foreign policy. Their internal affairs would right themselves if they would accept our civilisation and our standard of official probity. But if they are to preserve their independence they must learn to keep faith with foreign nations and meet honesty with honesty.

Although in our recent dealings with the Chinese they have shown better faith and more loyalty than before, we have still many crows to pick with them. Breaches of treaty are endless. One of the articles upon which we insist the most is that which provides that a British subject offending against the Chinese law shall be handed over for punishment to the nearest consul. The Taeping rebellion has attracted to its ranks a vast number of rowdies, many of them deserters from the Imperialist army. If these men were caught and left to the mercy of the native authorities, it is fearful to think what their fate would be. We are at this moment trying to rescue one man from their clutches, and investigating the case of another whom they reported to have died a

natural death while being taken to Shanghai; but as the report was not made until six weeks after his death, we suspect treachery. The central Government shows every disposition to help us, but governors of provinces are strong, and they know it. No stone, of course, will be left unturned to get back the living man (if indeed he be still alive), nor to exact retribution for the death of the other, if there should be proved to have been foul play. It is not yet all rose-colour, you see.

13th November.

We have no news yet of the mail of 10th September, which brings out our new chief, Sir Rutherford Alcock. I was to have gone to Tientsing to meet him, but I fancied the river journey would be rather cold; and I am very glad I did not go, as I should have been dangling about Tientsing all these days, not knowing what to do with myself. In the meanwhile we are busy preparing for his reception. I am already in my new house, which is rather pretty, with a great deal of Chinese carved woodwork, but eminently adapted for catching rheumatism.

It will cost me something to make it wind-tight. I hope, however, by degrees to make it comfortable and cosy.

I am in a state of philological orphanage. My first teacher, Ku, left me to go into some small office—office, however small, being dear to every Chinaman ; my second, a most charming person, was caught stealing a dollar off my table. The man was really such a pleasant companion and such a good master that I rather wished to ignore the whole thing ; but my servant Chang-Hsi represented that if Hsü Hsien Shêng remained he could be responsible for nothing that was lost, and so I had to pack off poor Hsü. He was a perfectly inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, proverbs, folk-lore, and Chinese small talk, so different from the ordinary run of Chinese teachers, whose only idea of broaching a conversation is to ask some preposterous question about one's "honourable country." If he could but have kept his hands from picking and stealing!

LETTER XVII

PEKING, 25*th November* 1865.

WE are sending off a mail to-day in the hopes that it will yet be able to leave Tientsing for Shanghai before we are finally shut out by the frost from communication with the outer world. After this our posts will be rare and uncertain, going by land to Chihfu and thence on. The winter has well set in; we have had several sharp frosts, which, although they are child's play to what I have seen in Russia, are aggravated by cutting winds which blow clouds of dust, pricking one's face like flights of needles. Nothing can be more bare and desolate than this city, now that it is stripped of its leaves. Everything looks gray and black, and the Chinese houses have a poor, pinched appearance that to English eyes, accustomed to see a cheerful fire blazing in

even the poorest cottages, is very shivery. The natives are already swaddled up in furs and wadding, and commend me to a cold Chinaman for looking wretched. Their yellow-brown faces get perfectly livid and corpse-like under the effect of the cold winds, a great contrast to the tanned and sturdy Mongols who are beginning to flock into the city. The life in the streets is changed too by the innumerable droves of Bactrian camels with double humps that are pouring in long streams of merchandise.

One great advantage of this time of year is in the improvement of our larder. In summer we are obliged to ring the changes on tough beef and stringy mutton; now we have plenty of game—hares, several sorts of pheasants, wild duck, teal, snipes, and other birds innumerable. Soon we shall have varieties of venison, amongst them that of an antelope of Mongolia which the Chinese call Hwang-Yang, "yellow sheep," said to be the daintiest venison in the world. Of fruit we have plenty; there is a certain small apple-shaped pear, by far the best I ever tasted. Grapes we have every day in the year, so that nature does as much for us as Mr. S——'s

gardener does for him. To be sure, the gardener beats nature hollow as to quality.

The *Peking Gazette* has just announced an appointment in the Chinese Foreign Office (the Tsung-Li Yamên), which is said to be the most important event, as far as foreign relations are concerned, that has taken place since the signature of Lord Elgin's treaty. A mandarin of the name of Hsü has been named one of the high Ministers of the Office. This man some years ago was in high office in the province of Fohkien, and while there, he, with the help of certain American missionaries, wrote a work on the geography of the world, in which he examined foreign institutions and men with an interest which no Chinaman had ever before shown. His two favourite heroes were Napoleon and Washington. The book was written in a popular form, and had a large sale. After he had been in office three years he came to Peking to pay his respects to the Emperor, and during his visit was degraded on the plea that he had not conducted his government well, but really on account of the new views put forward in his book, and of his admiration and intelligence of foreign affairs. Now, for the very

qualities which before brought him into disgrace, he is raised to the dignity of a red button of the third rank, and appointed to a vacancy in the Board of Foreign Ministers, which was made this spring by the dismissal of a mandarin named Hsüeh, who was degraded on account of his being suspected of attempts to bribe the Prince of Kung at the same time that His Imperial Highness was also out of favour. Hsü's acceptance of office is looked upon as the beginning of a new era in our intercourse with the Chinese.

Sir Rutherford Alcock has reached Tientsing after a series of disasters. He came in a man-of-war from Shanghai, disdaining the regular steamers, and the consequence is that everything has gone wrong, the last mishap being the loss of the Legation treasure outside the bar at Taku, with 18,000 dollars. The sailors managed to upset the chest into the sea as they were transhipping it into the little steamer which was to bring it up the Peiho. There is a rumour that divers have recovered the chest; if it is true, I think they deserve all its contents for their pains. The weather is not exactly suited for diving. Meanwhile the

Legation courtyards are being flooded with carts and packing-cases containing furniture, pianos, harmoniums, and games of croquet; the latter will be hard to use, for there is not a blade of grass nearer than the park round the Temple of Heaven.

LETTER XVIII

PEKING, *4th December* 1865.

THE messenger who brought us in the welcome mail of the 26th September also told us that there was still a chance of catching a vessel at Taku, before the final freezing of the Gulf of Pechili—the river, of course, is long since closed—so here goes for the last account of us before we are shut up.

Sir Rutherford Alcock arrived here last Wednesday with his family. They had a terrible journey of it; three days from Tientsing in sedan chairs, sleeping in inns without fires, and only paper windows in different degrees of bad repair.

We are enjoying the *beau idéal* of winter weather. We have had one fall of snow, which has left its traces in the shade and on the north side of the house-roofs; everywhere else it has disappeared under a sun which at mid-day is

always genial; the sharp frosts of the night and early morning keep the ground as hard as iron; the air is perfectly delicious, and for many days we have not been visited by our chief curse, the wind, which comes tearing down from Mongolia to choke and blind us with dust. This weather, fine as it is, comes very hard on the beggars, who go about stark naked, livid with cold. The filth of the furs which the poorer Chinese wear surpasses belief. It is a common sight to see the sunny side of a wall occupied by half a dozen of the natives who have deliberately stripped themselves and are eagerly hunting after the vermin with which they swarm. The principal streets are crowded with sellers of cast-off clothes, rags that would be rejected by a respectable paper factory. They toss these about, singing a sort of monotonous rhythmical chant all the time, after the manner of Chinese hucksters, and they do a thriving trade in filth.

We had an offer the other day of purchasing a plant that would make a man immortal if he ate it; as we had no desire any of us to undergo the fate of Tithonus at the price of 5000 taels, nearly £2000, we let it slip through our hands.

It was brought to us by a drug merchant, who said that he had found it in the mountains of Manchuria, and he produced a Chinese botanical work in support of his statements. The plant was a small black toad-stool; he called it the "tree of life," and said that it was only found once in a thousand years. We asked him why he did not sell his treasure to the Emperor; he replied that he would do so were it not for the way in which he would be bled by the palace officials. When, however, we asked where the last man who had eaten of the tree of life was to be heard of, he left in high disgust at our unbelief. The Chinese ideas of natural history are always very curious. Some days ago one of the wandering curio-sellers came to me with a beautiful little crystal snuff-bottle of what they call hair crystal, from the black veins like hair which run through it, and he thought it necessary to explain how the hair got into the crystal. "You see," said he, "as your Excellency knows, we Chinese did not always shave our heads as we do now. In the time of the Ming dynasty our people used to wear their hair long, but when the Tartars usurped the throne our people were all forced to shave their

heads. Accordingly they threw their hair which they had cut off into the sea. There the waves and the rays of the sun, combining their influences, acted upon this hair and produced the effect which your Excellency admires. But it was only in rare instances that the influences happened to coincide, and no man could of his own will, and by cutting off his hair, depend on its being turned into hair crystal."

The Emperor's journey to bury his father has been made the opportunity of rescinding all the decrees disgracing the Prince of Kung last spring. They are to be blotted out from the records of the Empire, so that future ages may know nothing about them.

LETTER XIX

PEKING, *1st January* 1866.

THE arrival of the mail last night brought the old year to a happy termination, but, alas! Saurin is to leave us for a German post. My batch of letters was doubly welcome, it was so long since I had heard from home, and may be such an age before another mail comes up from Chefoo ; as for the newspapers, they bring such stale news now that they are hardly worth plodding through. We get the pith of the news by the Russian post and telegraph to Kiachta, so reading the *Times* is like being gifted in a small way with the power of prophecy, and shows what a very tame affair life would be if we could foresee the future. Our papers are still speculating on Lord Palmerston's actions next session, and three weeks ago we heard the news of his death.

This morning I was awakened by a pro-

cession of all the Chinamen about the Legation, who came to bend the knee before me and wish me joy for the New Year. I hope all their good wishes, with mine into the bargain, may be realised for You.

Although it is a long time since I last wrote to you, I have little enough to say. Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock have settled down in their new quarters. I think they are rather disappointed, and no wonder; but they seem determined to make the best of everything, and to try and make every one comfortable about them. Sir Rutherford's first interview with the Prince of Kung passed off very well. I never saw the Prince so gracious. The Chinese Foreign Office, the Tsung-Li Yamên, is almost as bad a place for receiving in as our old building in Downing Street.[1] In order to be met at the great gates, which on grand occasions is *de rigueur*, we have to pass into the reception-room through the back kitchen, where we see all the little dainties which we are to eat being cooked by very dirty natives. The reception-room is a sort of octagonal glass pavilion in the middle of the courtyard, a

[1] Pulled down in 1864.

wretchedly cold place. However, the Chinese are independent of cold rooms, for they don't take off their furs (the fur of foxes' legs is the official dress), and they wear boots so thick that they cannot feel the cold stones of the floor. Of course a building so exposed is as hot in summer as it is cold in winter, so in this climate of extremes a visit to the Chinese Foreign Office is never very pleasant.

I should tell you that the Tsung-Li Yamên is really a board of high officials, all of whom hold other functions, which was created after the treaties of 1860 for the conduct of foreign affairs. There is no titular Foreign Minister.

One bright cold morning, about a fortnight ago, three of us witnessed a Chinese execution. The place of execution is at the opening of the vegetable market in the Chinese city. The market is held in a broadish street, into which a number of large thoroughfares, at right angles to it, lead. All these inlets were fenced off, and the street itself filled with soldiery and officials; such a tatterdemalion crowd! with nothing resembling uniformity of dress except the Tartar cap, and that, in many cases, was torn and battered, and tassel-less. The men were as

heterogeneous as their clothes. Old and young, strong and decrepit, half blind or whole deaf, none seemed too miserable objects for service. I saw one effective soldier on crutches; hunchbacks and cripples were in plenty. We left our horses in charge of some of these poor devils, and walked through the lines, no one opposing us, but, on the contrary, every one showing us the utmost civility. The whole of the shops in the street were closed, but the flat, low roofs were crowded with spectators; among them not a single woman or child was to be seen.

At one end of the space closed off was a matting shed. Inside this were the condemned prisoners, who were waiting for the Imperial decree for their death to be brought on to the ground. We went in, and I shall not easily forget the scene. There were fifteen criminals, of whom one was a woman, one was a murderer; two, of whom the woman was one, had stolen girls and sold them into the worst of all slavery; the rest were highway robbers. The murderer was to be decapitated, it being a severe punishment to a Chinese not to take his body out of the world as his parents gave it to him. (It is this feeling that makes them so averse to

amputation.) The others were all to be strangled. It is very strange to be talking with men who are to die within a few minutes. Some of them were perfectly calm and collected, and came up to talk with us and ask us questions, as if nothing was the matter. One bright, intelligent-looking fellow came up to me and said, "Well, I suppose you've come to see the fun." The word he used was the same that would be employed to signify the fun of a fair. "Do you have this sort of fun in your country?" another said laughingly. "I wish you would take me off with you." We said we should only be too glad; on which he smiled and said, "Ah! the law won't let you do that." One very old man could not forget his Asiatic politeness, even *in articulo mortis*. One of our party had asked a guard for a light for his cigar. The guard either did not hear or did not pay attention; on which the old fellow touched him and said, "What manners are these? don't you see the gentleman wants a light." All, however, were not so quiet. The murderer was raving and ranting drunk, howling out every obscene blasphemy that he could think of against the Emperor.

The woman had been charitably given some drug, which, though it had made her very sick, had deprived her of consciousness. Nothing could exceed the kindness of the officials, one and all, to the condemned men. They were giving them smokes out of their pipes, tea, and wine; even the wretched murderer, who was struggling and fighting between two soldiers, was only asked to "be quiet, be quiet," in spite of all provocation. The others were walking about the booth, their hands tied, and a sort of arrow stuck behind their backs, bearing their name and the crime for which they were to suffer, but otherwise uncontrolled. They were all from one part of the country. I told you that the woman had been drugged. This is a constant practice at executions. The most famous drug for this purpose is the blood from under the red crest of the crane, called by the Chinese "Ho ting hung." This, or a medicine purporting to be such, is sold at an immense price, and is said to be carried by mandarins in one of the beads of their necklaces, in order that if they incur the Emperor's displeasure, they may have the means of death at hand, for the crane's crest-blood is a poison as well as an

anodyne. We gave all the cigars we had with us to the poor condemned criminals, who were very grateful for them, and I was glad to leave so painful a scene. A little farther down the street another large booth had been erected. Here sat the high officials in a semicircle, with a red-button mandarin from the Board of Punishments at their head. On one side of this booth was a tiny sort of altar on which were displayed the tools of the executioner—the swords and bloody string, and the tourniquets and strings for strangling. In front of the altar a small brick stove had been built, over which was a caldron of boiling water, like a huge barber's pot, to warm the swords. The executioner's men were huddled round it toasting their hands. The swords are short broad blades, almost like choppers, with a long wooden handle on which is carved a grotesque head. They have been above two hundred years in use, and are regarded as genii and invested with preternatural powers. They are five in number, and their names are Great Lord, second Lord, third Lord, fourth Lord, and fifth Lord (Ta yeh, êrh yeh, san yeh, ssŭ yeh, and wu yeh). When they are not in use they are kept at the chief

executioner's house, a tower on the wall, where, as my teacher gravely informed me, they are often heard at night to sing gruesome songs of their past feats. When they are wanted their Lordships are "requested" to come out.

The executioners have all sorts of stories and traditions about them. One is supposed to be younger than the others, and of a skittish, frolicsome nature, dallying and toying with the heads, not striking them off at one blow like the others, who are older and more sedate. There were many false alarms that the decree had come and announced the fatal moment. But at last the chief headsman (Kwei-tzŭ-shou) came out, and throwing off his fur coat put on a bloodstained apron of yellow leather. He was a short, thick-set, but not ill-looking man, with that curious, anxious, *waiting* expression on his face that a man wears with serious work before him. It was horrid to see how completely he was the hero of the occasion, the soldiers round him treating him with the greatest deference, and evidently proud of a word from him. The five swords were carried in line near him. His assistant stripped his outer coat, and then all was ready. So soon

as the decree arrived the prisoners were led out one by one to the booth where the mandarins were sitting, and there made to go through the form of acknowledging the justice of their punishment. They were then handed over to the executioner. The headsman and his men had to beat back the other soldiers with sticks in order to clear a space. Nothing could be more indecent and revolting than the behaviour of the latter. All order and discipline were at an end; they were like hounds yelling, snarling, and struggling to tear a fox in pieces rather than men ostensibly employed to keep the peace. The murderer was the first man brought forward. Happily he had raved himself into a state of insensibility, so his pains were over. The decapitation is done with marvellous speed. A string is passed round the prisoner's neck, close under the chin, and his head is thus held up by the assistant so as to offer resistance to the sword. When a mandarin is executed, the headsman meets him and says, "Chîng ta jên kwei tien," "I pray that your Excellency may fly to heaven"—much as our executioners used to ask the pardon of their victims. The man is made to kneel, in

an instant the sword is raised, the executioner gives a shriek supposed to represent the words "I have executed a man" (Sha liao jên), and at one blow the head is severed from the trunk and carried off to be inspected by the mandarins. As the blow falls the people all cry out, "A good sword" (hao Tao), partly in praise of the headsman's skill, but more especially from a superstitious feeling *um berufen.* The strangling is done with the same merciful quickness. It is far less lengthy than hanging. Two pieces of whip-cord are passed round the neck with a loop. The criminal is placed with his face to the ground, and the two executioners turn the tourniquet as quick as thought. Apparently there is no suffering. As I passed the big booth on my way out—for you may imagine that when I had seen how the matter was conducted I stayed for no more—I heard a loud voice shout out a name. Immediately out of the shed where the rest of the condemned were waiting, I saw a tall man walk out between two others as leisurely and composedly as if he had been going to his dinner. It was one of the young fellows with whom I had spoken so short a time before. The last act

of this horror is consummated in the *Pit of the* 10,000 (Wan Jên K'êng) by the wolves and foxes, a pit in the Chinese city where the bodies of executed criminals are thrown. Rich people's bodies are bought back by their families that they may receive decent burial.

I was glad to see that the execution was conducted far more mercifully than one is led to suppose by certain writers. It is true that this is not the "Ling Chih," or disgraceful slow death, which is the punishment of parricide[1] and high treason. But an Englishman who has witnessed that assures me that the criminal he saw so executed was put out of his misery at once, and that the mutilation took place *after* death and not before. I was specially struck by the excessive kindness of the soldiery to the criminals. The only sign of cruel disposition was the eagerness with which they pressed forward to see the death. That was revolting.

[1] The crime of parricide includes high treason, murder of parents, elders in the family, and of the teacher, in such reverence is learning held. The murder of a master by an apprentice comes under the same category. A parricide is said to be an "owl-tiger," both animals being supposed to devour their parents. The owl especially eats its mother's head and eyes. The laugh of an owl portends death in a family.

Of all the men who died that day not one appeared to be in the slightest degree affected by the solemnity of his position, or to show any apprehension for what was to follow. Where there was any emotion it was simply abject terror of the immediate pain of dying. Beyond that their thoughts did not seem to penetrate.

I must bring this letter of horrors to an end.

LETTER XX

PEKING, 20*th January* 1866.

SINCE I last wrote we have all been leading the lives of vegetables in our own garden; with a skating rink inside the Legation there is no excuse for facing the wind and dust outside. We have the greatest difficulty in keeping up our rink. The wind blows the dust on to the ice in clouds, and the hot sun melts it in, so that nothing but constant flooding will keep the ice going. This has been an unusually dry season even for this driest of climates, so much so that a few days ago a decree appeared in the *Peking Gazette* directing five princes of the blood to proceed to different temples, and offer up incense, and pray for snow. The Emperor had a cold, or he would have gone himself. The *Peking Gazette*, by the way, is a very curious little publication. It appears daily in the form of a small pamphlet, and is

sold for a trifling sum. It is said to have been first published in the time of the Sung dynasty, about seven hundred years before its brother of London was born at Oxford. It contains the movements of the court, Imperial decrees, petitions, memorials and the answers thereto, appointments, promotions, rewards, etc. Some of the announcements are very amusing. I give you one or two specimens. Some months ago, at the storming of a town which was in the hands of the rebels, at the very moment when a mine had been sprung, Kwan-Ti, the god of war, appeared in all his majesty (it don't seem quite clear who saw him), and by his presence so encouraged the Imperialist troops that they rushed into the breach with an ardour which carried everything before it, and sacked the city. In gratitude for this, at the request of the high officials of Shan Hsi, the Emperor directs the officers of the Han Lin (Imperial college) and of the Nan Shu Fang (private Imperial library) to prepare a tablet to be erected in some temple in Shan Hsi to commemorate the divine interposition. Notice is sent by the authorities of Cheh Kiang to the Board of Ceremonies and Rites that a widow in those

parts, being in uncontrollable grief for her husband's death, and resolved to preserve her fidelity to him, has committed suicide. Posthumous honours are awarded to her for her great chastity. (To commit suicide on the death of her husband is the highest virtue which a Chinese wife can show. The streets of Peking are in many places crossed by wooden triumphal arches called Pai Lo in honour of these chaste matrons. It would seem, however, rather as if this extreme chastity were dying out, for I don't know one of these arches that is not in the last stage of decay.) A taotai, governor of a city from down south, has come up to Peking on business connected with the sulphur trade. Having finished what he had to do, he reminds the Government that his father was killed some years ago in the rebellion in Shan Hsi, and his body never recovered. He represents that the old gentleman's bones weigh heavily upon him and make him feel very uncomfortable, and he suggests that the Government might send him on a special mission to Shan Hsi to try and recover these same bones, paying his expenses as a matter of course. The Government, in reply to this, praise his filial piety, enter

into his views about the bones with enthusiasm, encourage him by all means to try and find them, but positively decline to open their purse-strings. Posthumous honours, canonisation, or deification, are often recorded in the *Gazette*.

Old Hêng-Chi is the officer of the Tsung-Li Yamên charged with negotiating a new commercial treaty with the Russians relative to the Siberian and Mongolian trade. Whenever he is going to be particularly obstructive he sends po-po (sweetmeats) to the Legation. Now I suppose he is going to play the Russians some *tour pendable*, for he sent a whole feast both to the minister and secretary of Legation. It was very prettily arranged; the decoration of the dishes and piling of the sweetmeats in patterns must have cost the cook a world of trouble. I think I once before gave you an account of a Chinese feast given by the same old gentleman, and I daresay you don't wish a repetition of the account any more than I do of the feast, though the things are not bad once in a way. The bird's-nest soup was very good, though it owes its flavour to the condiments with which it is dressed, the nest

itself being as tasteless as isinglass, which it much resembles.

My teacher the other day gave me some original views as to the outbreak of cholera which took place a few years ago. Various causes were assigned for it. Some said that the epidemic was caused by the exhalations from the dead bodies of those who were killed in the Tâi Pîng rebellion; others, that offence had been given to Wên Shên, the spirit of pestilence, a deity who is represented with a blue face and red hair and beard. He carries in his hand a disk, a spear, a sword, or some warlike weapon. A man who has fallen into misfortune is said to have met Wên Shên. To be "as ugly as the Lord Wên Shên" is what we should translate by "to be as ugly as sin."

We had rather a good piece of fun the other night. One of our ladies of the *Corps diplomatique* has started Thursday "at homes," and all the Europeans in Peking congregate there. Last Thursday some one or other sat down and played a valse, upon which a tarantula bit the only two ladies, and they declared they must and would dance, so Pichon, the French attaché, and I were told off as partners for them. Just

as we were spinning round the room, in came three or four Chinese servants with trays of cake and hot wine, which I thought they would have dropped, so stupefied were they at the sight. I don't think I ever saw astonishment so written on faces before. I can fancy them talking about it afterwards—Ai yah! There was his Excellency Mi (that's me) and Pi Lao Yeh seizing the two Ku-niangs (young ladies) round the waist in the most indecorous manner, and running round and round the room with them, while O Lao Yeh beat the harp-table. Indeed it was unsurpassable! Strange people these barbarians!

Saurin and I had a visit from Mr. Thomas the day before yesterday. He is famous in China as the converse of St. Matthew, having left the Church to go to the Customs. Mr. Thomas is a linguist of some pretensions. He speaks several European languages (including Russian), Chinese, Japanese, and Mongol. He came out about two years ago as a member of one of the Missionary Societies, but quarrelled with his brother missionaries because he had the good sense to refuse to preach in Chinese after being three months in the country.

He then entered the Chinese Customs service, and was stationed at Chihfu when I passed by there in May last. However, he has now returned to the flock, and is living with the other missionaries at Peking. Mr. Thomas has just returned from a trip to Corea, which he undertook for purposes of linguistic research, and we were greatly in hopes of hearing something about that *terra incognita*. While Mr. Thomas was at Chihfu he was able to be civil to two Corean merchants who had gone there to collect debts. They were Christians, and brought open letters with them from the Roman Catholic mission at Saoul, the capital of Corea, entreating any Christians whom they might fall in with to treat them kindly. Mr. Thomas took them to live with him, and commenced studying Corean under their auspices. When they were about to return to their own country Mr. Thomas accompanied them. He appears, however, to have seen little or nothing. His landings were but for short walks, principally on islands along the coast. He reached a point of the coast 25 miles from Saoul, to which he intended to have gone in the disguise of a Corean in mourning for his father and mother, the face

completely covered by a long veil, loose white clothes hiding the body, the costume being completed by a hat with a brim about a yard and a half in diameter. The wreck of his Corean junk prevented his effecting his purpose (possibly luckily for him), and he was obliged to return to China in a Chinese junk; so he underwent incredible hardships from hunger and dirt, and great danger from shipwreck, to little purpose; what he acquired of the language must have been through his two friends, and he can give no account of the people, who must be a curious race. Not only are they so exclusive that they forbid foreigners to enter their country, but they prevent their own people from leaving it, as the Japanese did; only certain privileged persons are allowed to come to China with tribute to the Emperor or for trading purposes. There are plenty of these in Peking at the present moment; they are distinguished by their high hats and peculiar type; any Corean not belonging to this guild who left his country would be decapitated on his return. It is strange that, notwithstanding this rigid exclusiveness, the Roman Catholic missionaries seem to live undisturbed at Saoul, where

they are said to have made many converts. They are obliged, however, to wear the Corean mourning so as to hide their faces, and conform to the habits of the country.[1]

The most important part of Mr. Thomas' tale is a report that 250 Coreans have gone over the Amoor, and tendered allegiance to the Russians. Of course Russia will have Corea sooner or later, but I think that if this report were true we must have heard of it from other sources.[2]

[1] They were massacred a year later, their murder leading to the abortive French expedition against Corea.

[2] In the following year this accomplished and adventurous gentleman made another trip to Corea in an American ship. Not one of the party was ever seen again, but a report reached Peking that the Coreans had burnt the ship with all hands in the river not far from Saoul.

LETTER XXI

PEKING, *3rd February* 1866.

THE mail day has come round again very quickly, so I am in hopes that you are getting letters more regularly than I had led you to expect. If the wonderfully warm weather we are enjoying now lasts, the river must break up soon, and then we shall have regular mails again. On the 30th of January the thermometer stood at 40° Fahrenheit at midnight. The Chinese are in great glee; after having consumed infinite amounts of joss-stick in praying for snow, and sent out princes of the blood to shiver in distant temples, and all in vain, the Emperor went out one morning to pray on his own account, and on that very morning the snow came. We took advantage of what has turned out to be the last of the frost, for the present at least, to make an expedition to Yuen-Ming-Yuen and skate on the lake. It was such

a bright, pretty scene—the lake was as clear as a sheet of glass, and the ice perfectly transparent—not very good for skating, though, for the lotus plants do not quite lie down. However, every now and then we came upon a hundred yards square of marvellous ice, uncut by skates and free from dust. A number of Chinese came to look at us; figure-skating astonished them immensely, especially anything done going backwards. Some of the natives skate after a fashion, but they are generally contented with tying a skate on to one foot and pushing themselves along with the other. It is said that skating used to form part of the Manchu bannermen's drill. We picnicked in one of the little pavilions in the garden, and very jolly we were.

I went a few days ago, for the first time, to visit the Russian missionary establishment (the head of which is the Archimandrite Palladius), in the north-east corner of the Tartar city. It is surrounded by a large open space; the air is fresh; there is no dust, and above all there is immediate egress into the country without having to cross miles of filthy streets. It is such a pity that the Legations were not established up

there in 1861. The mission consists of three priests besides the chief; there is a day-school for twenty-four children, whose parents are all Christians; indeed, the Archimandrite told me that the neighbouring population were almost all converts. The Russians have altogether a large congregation here, an important element in which are the Albazines. The Albazines were originally a small colony of Russian labourers, who settled at the little town of Albazin on the Amoor. In the time of Alexis, father of Peter the Great, the Chinese made war upon this little colony, and after a desperate resistance on their part, which lasted about two years, conquered them and took prisoners those whom they did not kill. On account of the great bravery which they had shown, the survivors were carried to Peking and made to serve as soldiers. Here they have lived to the present time, having become Chinese in everything save in the matter of their religion, which they have faithfully preserved. From father to son they have been forced to serve as soldiers, and allowed to select no other career. It is only recently that a decree has been issued emancipating them from this rule, and per-

mitting them to follow trade, labour, or letters. There are probably not more than ten or fifteen pure Albazine families left; but as they have intermarried freely with the Chinese and Christianised their women, they largely swell the Greek congregation. The carrying off of people on both frontiers has been an old standing quarrel between China and Russia. It was to settle questions of this sort that Peter the Great sent an embassy to the Emperor Kâng-Hsi. This embassy was the foundation of the two Russian missions, that of the south being the present Legation, and that of the north the Church mission. The southern mission was used by the merchants of the caravans which used to arrive from Siberia once in three years, to transact business between the two countries; it has been recently rebuilt, all except the chapel, which dates from Peter's time, and which still bears the marks of an earthquake which occurred in the middle of the last century. The Archimandrite told me that when he first came to Peking twenty-five years ago there was no more difficulty in holding intercourse with the people than there is at present. The priests of the mission could not go beyond

the Great Wall in one direction, nor as far as Tientsing in the other; but this was owing to the mandarins, who always were, and probably always will be, obstructive. The people were friendly enough; those who did not know them, seeing strangely dressed figures with fair beards and hair for the first time, took them for Manchu Tartars; so even now it often happens that we Europeans are taken for Mongols by the Chinese who have seen neither race.

I was talking the other day to my teacher about Lord Palmerston and his wonderful strength of body and mind. He was greatly interested, and cited two instances in Chinese history of statesmen who were flourishing and vigorous after eighty years of age. The first case he mentioned was that of the minister Liang, who, in the reign of the Empress Wu-Tseih-Tien of the Tang dynasty (seventh century A.D.), obtained the highest literary degree, and became premier at the age of eighty-two. The second case he cited was more legendary.

Wên Wang, father of Wu Wang, the first Emperor of the Chou dynasty (and a contemporary of Saul, King of Israel), dreamt a dream,

and in his dream he saw a beast that was like a boar and yet like a man, and it had wings and flew. Now when he awoke he was sorely troubled in his heart, because he could not read the meaning of his dream; so he sent for the court seer, and the court seer told him that the interpretation of his dream was, that he should have a wise and crafty councillor. When Wên Wang heard this, he immediately sallied forth in his chariot to seek for this wise man, and he took with him his two sons. After many days he came to a river called Wei-Shui-Ho, and by the side of the river was an old man fishing. The name of this old man was Tai Kung, and during the reign of the wicked Emperor Chou-Hsin he had lived in a cave in a mountain, cultivating learning. When Wên Wang saw the old man he told his sons to descend from the chariot and ask him the road. But the old man went on with his fishing, and answered them, saying, "Behold the little fishes have come to me, but the big fish stops away." Now when this oracular answer was told to Wên Wang he immediately knew that this must be the wise man that was promised to him in his dream, for

the old man's saying was a reproach to him that he had not himself gone down, as manners required, but sent his sons instead. So Wên Wang invited Tai Kung to get into his chariot, and he carried him off and made him his chief minister. At that time Tai Kung was eighty years old and more. When Wên Wang died Wu Wang treated Tai Kung with the honours due to a father, for it was by his wise counsels that the dynasty became strengthened in the kingdom. He lived to nearly a hundred years of age, and at his death he became a spirit, and many say that he is now the captain of all the spirits, and assigns to each his particular place and duties.

The above is a word for word translation of the story of Tai Kung as my teacher told it me.

LETTER XXII

PEKING, *8th February* 1866.

I EXPECT this will reach England with the bag that was despatched last Saturday; at any rate it will give you a few days later news; I have but little to say.

The student interpreters gave a second theatrical representation on Monday. The pieces were "Our Wife" and "To Paris and back for £5." To my mind the most amusing part of the entertainment was to watch the faces of the Chinese servants at the back, who, not understanding a word, were deeply interested in the performance, and said that it was very beautiful, especially the first piece, in which the makeshifts for Louis XIII. dresses charmed them much. The ladies stood on an average 5 feet 10 inches in their stockings, and had blue marks where whiskers and beards had been shaved off in the morn-

ing; but in spite of all drawbacks, everybody agreed that there never had been and never could be such a success—which has always been said of every private performance I ever witnessed.

No one could believe that we are ice-bound here. Yesterday the thermometer at 2 P.M. stood at 84° in our courtyard; at eight in the morning it had been down to 22°, a difference of 62°! The Chinese complain bitterly of the heat. The Emperor was to go again to pray for snow to-day, and the *Peking Gazette* publishes an article from one of the Imperial advisers, stating that the want of snow must be ascribed to the anger of heaven on two accounts: 1st, undue severity on the part of minor officials in the Board of Punishments; 2nd, the number of bodies killed in the rebellion and still lying unburied.

What thieves these mandarins are! Some time ago when the Tien Wang (Prince of Heaven), the chief of the Tái Ping rebellion, poisoned himself, his son fled carrying with him his father's great seal, which, on his capture, was carried to the Emperor at Peking. The seal was a huge affair of massive gold with two

dragons on the top. Its value was about £600. When the Emperor had seen it, it was handed over to the Prince of Kung and the Grand Council, and by them deposited under lock and key in the council office, the watching of which by night is confided to certain high officials. When the turn of night duty fell to one Sa, a man of good family and a mandarin of the fourth button, the seal was missing. There was a great hue and cry, and all the wretched servants in the office were carried off to the Board of Punishments, where they were tortured *secundum artem*, the real thief Sa being quite above suspicion. Meanwhile he carried off the seal to a goldsmith's shop in the Chinese city, telling him that he had received orders from the palace to have it melted down. The man undertook the job and put the seal into the melting-pot ; but the two dragons, being harder than the rest of the metal, would not melt, so they were put on one side to wait till a hotter fire could be prepared. As luck would have it a friend of the goldsmith, who had heard of the loss of the seal, came in, and seeing the two dragons, smelt a rat, and laid an information. Sa was tried, found guilty, and strangled in the

vegetable market. He was a well-to-do man, and his family were rich people, so the money was not needed. But a little peculation, however small, is dear to a mandarin's heart.

Sa was not a master of his craft; he had not sufficiently considered the eleventh commandment, — most important to a Chinese official.

LETTER XXIII

PEKING, *7th March* 1866.

My last letter to you was dated 8th February, on which day the festivities of the Chinese New Year began with the feast of Tsao, the god of the hearth. This, of course, is inaugurated with popping of fireworks and banging of cannon. Tsao is of all the spirits the one most intimately connected with the family, and every year, eight days before the New Year, he goes to heaven to make his report. Now as in every family there must always be some little secrets which it is not desirable should be known in heaven, it is essential that something should be done to prevent Tsao's tongue from wagging too freely, so offerings are made to him of barley-sugar, that his mouth may be sticky! At the same time, upon either side of his niche, which stands in the kitchen, are pasted posters of red paper,

the one bearing the words "Go to heaven and make a good report," the other "Come back to your palace and bring good luck." The niche is then burnt, and the god rises to heaven to come back on New Year's Day, against which time a new niche is prepared for him.

As the New Year approaches, the principal amusement in the streets is flying kites. These are admirably made, and represent all manner of birds, beasts, and fishes. There are some which even represent centipedes, but I have not seen those. In the tail of the kite is placed a sort of Æolian harp, such as I once told you the Chinese attach to their pigeons. I cannot tell you what a strange effect these weird-looking monsters humming high up in the air present. The Street of Lanterns, too, begins to make a great show. Lamps of every variety of shape, from a bouquet of flowers to a fiery dragon, are exposed for sale and bought in quantities.

On New Year's Eve the houses are cleaned up and put in order. Characters of good omen are pasted on all the door-posts; from the window-sills little strips of red paper stamped like lace flutter in the wind. An altar is

erected in the courtyard with candles and offerings, while crackers and fireworks are let off all night to chase away all the evil Spirits that have been about during the year, and especially the Spirit of Poverty.

The 15th of February was the Chinese New Year's Day. It was a bright, fine day, and the people were all figged out in the best raiment available, either from their own wardrobes or those of the pawnbrokers, whose chests must have been emptied of every article of smart clothing for the occasion. All the shops were shut, but not empty; for from many of them there issued the most infernal clatter that ever stunned human ears. I looked into one, my curiosity getting the better of my manners, and there I saw a number of respectable middle-aged *bourgeois* sitting in a circle, and each with a clapper, gong, cymbals, or drum, beating for dear life with the gravest of faces. This was exorcising devils, and, if devils have ears, ought to be a successful plan. The streets are full of people paying complimentary visits to their friends, a ceremony which is nowhere so universally observed as in China. Outside the Chien Mên, one of the gates leading from

the Tartar into the Chinese city, is a small yellow-tiled Imperial temple to Kwan-Ti, the god of war. This is crowded with worshippers on New Year's Day. High and low flock to pay their respects and draw their lot for the year. Outside the temple were a couple of priests doing a brisk trade in tracts and joss-sticks. Armed with a bundle of the latter, which are whisked about in flames, to the great peril of European beards, the devout advance and perform the kǒtǒu before the altar with three kneelings and nine knockings of the head. They then draw nearer to the altar, and from a sort of cup which stands upon it draw at random a slip of bamboo with certain characters upon it. This is exchanged according to its inscription for a piece of paper which is handed to the votary for a few cash by an attendant priest, and which contains his fortune for the year. The people who took part in this ceremony were excessively devout in their demeanour; there was no symptom of levity or indifference; they were imploring the protection of a divine being for the coming year, with superstition if not with piety. The richer worshippers were making offerings of pigs and sheep as sacrifice.

I don't recollect whether I ever mentioned to you the Liu Li Chang, a street of booksellers and curiosity shops, and one of my favourite lounges here. It is one of the lions of the New Year. A very amusing fair is held there. It is perfectly thronged with people, and a very gay scene. Toys and artificial flowers are the best things sold; some of the former are capital. Lifelike models of insects, tiny beasts and birds, tops, kites of all shapes, and above all some little figures of European soldiers and sailors—caricatures of the late war—that were irresistibly comic. One man was selling a capital toy—two little figures, jointed, and so contrived that by pulling a horsehair which is not seen they begin to fight and go through every motion of desperate wrestling. There were some jugglers, but rather a low lot. One man was having bricks smashed on his head—a somewhat alarming performance, for which, however, he seemed none the worse. Then there was a combat between sword and spear, after the manner of Savile House in old days, which ended in sword getting a kick in the stomach and a poke in the ribs, which well earned a sixpence. A peep-show represented views taken in China and

Europe, of which the exhibitor was as ignorant as his audience: he described St. Paul's Cathedral and the Bay of Naples as places of repute in the Lew Chew Islands; and I really should be ashamed to tell you what was painted on the reverse of the view of St. Paul's. A temple of the Chinese Æsculapius in one corner of the fair was crowded with visitors, who were pressing round the stall of a venerable gentleman whose stock-in-trade was a bushel or two of teeth and a picture representing the treatment of every variety of disease in diagrams. The teeth he had extracted were mostly sound! Fortune-tellers were casting up chances, and wise men reading destinies in all the courts, which were piled high with votive tablets from grateful patients. As to the walls, the tablets on them were three deep. The crowd were uniformly civil to us, but oh, the garlic of them! It was high jinks for the beggars, who were more than usually offensive and pertinacious, especially the women with sick babies, who would insist on wishing one a Happy New Year in every key. It's no use being pitiful, for if you give to one you will have a tail of a hundred at your heels.

The New Year's festivities last for a fortnight or so; it is an endless succession of feasting and fireworks until the Feast of Lanterns, twelve days after New Year's Day. The latter is quite a bright scene with all the lanterns and transparencies, but it sounds much more than it is.

I must tell you something about the Chinese travellers who are going to Europe, and whom you will see or hear about. Mr. Hart, the Inspector-General of Customs, is going home on leave, and the Chinese Government have ordered his Chinese secretary, with his son and three young Chinamen, students of European languages, to accompany him. Pin Chun, the gentleman in question, has been raised to the Clear Blue Button, third grade, and made an honorary chief clerk in the Foreign Office on the occasion. His son has been made a clerk in the Foreign Office. It is a great pity that the Chinese did not choose a more intelligent and younger man than Pin Chun, who is sixty-four years old, and a shocking twaddle. He and his son are, from what I have seen and heard of them, quite incapable of forming just appreciations of what they will see. Then, for

their first mission to Europe, although it has no official character, they should have chosen a mandarin of more importance than Pin, whose reports will have but little weight with the lettered class of Chinese; indeed, these are jealous of his promotion, and consider that his distinction is too cheaply earned. The reason of Pin's having been chosen is that he is a connection by marriage with one of the ministers of the Chinese Foreign Office. He is said to be very popular in Pekingese society, so at any rate, when he comes back, what he has seen will be talked about in the "highest circles"; and he is personally acquainted with the Prince of Kung, who proposed the mission to him at a wedding breakfast. Pin has no official character as envoy. He is told to travel and write down all about the "hills and streams" of the countries he visits, and he will be trotted about to every object of interest. I only hope that he will not be too much lionised. It would be misinterpreted here, where people would say at once, "See what great people we are; when a private traveller among us goes to your country he is received with the respect which you know is due to a superior intelligence, but your bar-

barian ministers even are not received here,—of course our Emperor is great and powerful, and you are only here on sufferance."

I must leave off. I am just starting to Tientsing to see Saurin off, alas! and when I come back it will be to almost entire solitude.

Perhaps I have spoken rather too slightingly of Pin Chun's mission. It is a small thing in itself, but we all look upon it as the first step towards permanent missions in Europe and better relations here.

LETTER XXIV

PEKING, 12*th April* 1866.

I AM going to tell you about an entertainment at the house of a Chinese mandarin. You will have gathered from my former letters to you that we see nothing of the Chinese in their own houses; their life and habits are a sealed book to us. We only see the mandarins in full dress and with the mask they wear in conference. It was a great pleasure to me, therefore, to make the acquaintance of a Chinese gentleman of good position, who is so far enlightened above his fellows as to like and even seek the society of Europeans, and learn what he can from them. Yang Lao Yeh is a mandarin wearing a blue button of the third grade; he is nominally on the staff of the officials of the Board of War, but his private fortune of some ten or twelve thousand pounds a year makes him independent of his office, except in so

far as his social rank is concerned (for, as you know, in China, to hold office is to be a gentleman). I became acquainted with him through the Russian Legation, with which he has had intercourse for some three years or more, and he invited a party of us to his house at the time of the Feast of Lanterns. He occupies a large house in the Chinese city. We went to him at about eleven o'clock in the morning. As he had not expected us quite so early we spent half an hour in going over the premises. I had never before seen the interior of a Chinese gentleman's home; I imagined, however, that Yang's would be a very favourable specimen of a rich man's house. It is very pretty, with innumerable courtyards round which the dwelling-houses are built. The principal court surrounds a small artificial pond, in the centre of which is a sort of glass summer-house approached by two little miniature bridges with tiny white lions of white marble guarding them at intervals. Rockeries, which are a very favourite garden ornament, caves, grottoes, and turrets with battlements, all on a Liliputian scale, are crammed wherever there is room, in a most picturesque defiance of order

and architecture. The only attempts at flowers and shrubs are a few of the famous dwarfed trees, trained so as to represent with their branches characters of good omen, such as Happiness, Longevity, etc. A broad terrace walk surmounts the whole. But besides having the most perfect luxury *à la Chinoise*, Yang is a great amateur of all European inventions. He has a room fitted up after our fashion, and his whole house is full of guns, telescopes, clocks, barometers, thermometers, and other foreign importations. He has even gone so far as to fit up a photographic studio, and takes lessons in the art, which he practises with considerable success. He gave us really capital portraits of himself of his own execution. When we had wandered all over the house Yang led us into the private apartments where breakfast had been prepared for us. Here he presented to us his son, a very small boy of sixteen, but a white-buttoned mandarin, nevertheless (of course the rank had been purchased; in China both civil and military rank can be bought). The ladies of the family, resplendent in silks and satins of many colours, and painted so that not a particle of *themselves* was visible,

were separated from us by a curtain through which they kept continually peeping, anxious to see, and not unwilling to be seen. We were joined by two mandarins, one from the Board of Punishments, the other from the Board of Revenue, both very cheery and talkative. The breakfast was by far the highest effort of Chinese culinary art that I have yet seen; a certain marinade of venison, especially, was beyond praise. Being asked to eat with chopsticks always rather reminds me of the fable of the fox who invited the stork to dinner, and makes me appreciate the feelings of the stork on that occasion; but Yang had provided forks, so we were able to eat on equal terms with our entertainer, who, apropos of chopsticks, told us a story of a courtier who was so expert with that utensil that when a grain of rice once fell from the Imperial lips he caught it between his sticks as it fell, for which feat he was on the spot promoted to high office and emoluments.

The only fault of the breakfast was that there was too much of it, and as we were perpetually being pledged by our host and his friends in warm wine of the headiest nature (no heeltaps), matters were beginning to look

serious, when happily the dishes were cleared away and tea was brought. I thought the eating was all over, but not a bit of it: it was only a pause in our labours; for in came a huge and delicious tureen of bird's-nest soup and pigeons' eggs with cream of rice in bowls to drink—excellent, but stodgy,—and so a Chinese feast goes on all day without a halt. We witnessed an instance of the duty which a Chinese son shows to his father; for not only did Yang's son not sit down to dinner with us, but he waited at table like a sort of upper servant, handing his father's pipe, and anticipating all our wants. Amongst other things which he forced upon us was a bottle of Curaçoa, which much delighted the Chinese guests. I ought to have mentioned that before breakfast began, a company of acrobats made their appearance to perform in the yard. The contortionists were two women and four little girls. The band, which hardly stopped clashing during upwards of three hours, consisted of a gong, two pair of cymbals, and a single kettledrum, beaten by men. The performance was chiefly rope-dancing and tumbling; the tricks were not in themselves as good as what we see daily in the streets of European

cities, but the difficulty of them was enhanced by the performers all being small-footed. The elder woman was amazingly strong. Lying on her back she balanced tables, chairs, and other heavy objects on her feet as if they had been feathers, and wound up by taking a large wine jar into which a little girl had been put, like the forty thieves in the *Arabian Nights*, and tossing it about on her tiny goat's hoofs in the most alarming manner. Whenever a trick was reaching its climax, the band, indefatigable and painfully conscientious, beat away vigorously, making the morning hideous with their *chari-vari*. To rest the women, who then took their places at the musical instruments, the men began to show off some juggling tricks. It was a mean performance, however, the tricks being all of the commonest and most transparent—such as the production of bowls of fishes, flower-pots, etc. The best trick was the waving of a sort of whip of paper twelve yards long and four inches wide, attached to a short stick. This the performer brandished and flourished in all directions, making the paper assume all manner of graceful shapes: now it was a snake crawling in huge coils along the

ground, now a spiral column like Donato the one-legged dancer's scarf, now a series of hoops through which the juggler skipped backwards and forwards. This was a very exhausting exercise. During the performances a rather amusing dialogue was carried on between the old man of the party and a small boy who acted the part of Mr. Merryman, steadily refusing to believe in the possibility of the tricks announced. The acrobats were not paid their fee all at once, but instead of giving applause for any particularly successful exertion, Yang would send them out money, and as we, according to Chinese custom, did the same, they received a plentiful largesse. One point of contrast between rope-dancing in China and in Europe is its decency. The women all wore their heavy winter trousers and loose jackets fastened at the waist by a sash—a costume which shows no outline of the form.

We stayed with Yang until three in the afternoon. I believe he had expected us to spend the night in his house; but the entertainment was becoming wearisome; besides, the Chinese do not understand our ideas of comfort—paper windows, thorough draughts, stone

floors, and hard benches explain why they wrap themselves up in wadding and furs, and wear boots an inch thick in the soles. They are far behind the Turks in these respects. I, for one, thought a night in the Chinese city rather too much of a good thing, and was glad to make my bow. Our host, his son, and his Chinese guests, who, by the bye, had at an early hour gone off to a back room to enjoy a pipe of opium, came to the outer gate to see us off, and we parted with many expressions of good-will on both sides.

I have had a deal of talk with Yang; he is certainly by far the most advanced Chinaman I have met yet. Railways and telegraphs, which are the bugbears of the Chinese ministers, are to him necessities which it is foolish to stave off; indeed, he spoke to me about constructing a tramway and telegraph over his property in Shantung for the convenience of communicating with his tenants and agents. Any new European invention which he hears of, instead of shaking his head and saying, "Ai ya! it is very wonderful!" he sends for and tries to introduce into the country. Indeed, more than this, if he is not called to high office next year, he

proposes visiting Europe, Russia, France, and England; perhaps he will go home with me.

The Peking races came off on the 4th inst. They were a great success. The course was made at a place called Wang-ho-lou, about three miles outside the city. It is the bed of an old lake dried up; a pretty spot surrounded by hillocks, and with the mountains in the background. Every mound was covered with thousands of Chinese who had come to gape and wonder at the barbarian sports. Two of the ministers of the Foreign Office, Hêng and Chung, came to the grand stand. Old Chung had brought with him his grandson, a smart little fellow of eight years old, as dignified as a judge, and far graver than his grandfather. I made the little fellow sit by me at breakfast, and plied him with good things, of which he expressed his approbation with the solemnity of a Burleigh. Wine I could not get him to touch, not even champagne. Altogether, considering the means, or rather want of means, at our disposal, we managed to have a capital day's sport. Our little ponies are very fast. An old pony that Saurin gave me, "Kwan-du," won the half-mile race, running it in one minute

and five seconds, without training, and with 11 stone on his back. Between our races the two ministers made the officers of their escort show off their ponies; one, a small gray pony of Hêng's, was a regular little beauty, and would have been much admired in Rotten Row. But I think that the prettiest pony on the course was a little bay pony that I call "Hop-o'-my-thumb"—a little fellow that I bought some time ago to replace my cob, which, according to my usual luck, went lame in the shoulder without hope of cure. The Chinese on the race day were not so civil as usual; we had much ado to keep the course, and when we were going away they yelled, shouted, and shrieked at us like a pack of wolfish fiends. They even went so far as to throw a few stones, none of which struck any one; of course, in such a crowd it was impossible to identify all the offenders; however, one or two got well thrashed. A little while ago I was riding with Sir Rutherford and a lady to the Temple of Heaven, when at the bottom of the main street of the Chinese city we were mobbed and attacked with stones and brickbats, one of which struck our escort. It is no use complaining to the authorities—we get

no redress. I have begun to think for some time past that the *bonhomie* of the Chinese, which was so taking to me at first, is only a mask to cover hatred and disgust, happily tempered by the most abject terror and cowardice. However that may be, we are the masters for the present, and they know it—that is all that is required.

We are enjoying lovely spring weather now, warm and genial, with a little rain to remind one of home. The town is beginning to show a little green from the wall, on which dog-violets and vetches, very much dried up and sapless, are putting their noses out of the crannies between the bricks.

13th April.

Mail-day. No letters from home for a month past, and we hear that the mail has broken down at Galle.

LETTER XXV

PEKING, 22*nd April* 1866.

SINCE I last wrote I have done nothing and seen nothing that I have not told you about over and over again. However, to-morrow morning I am off for a three weeks' trip into Mongolia with Dr. Pogojeff of the Russian Legation. We shall go out of China by the Nan Kŏu Pass, and come in by my former route of Ku-Pei-Kŏu. I am looking forward with immense interest to seeing a little of Mongol life for the first time. It will be a new experience. I am afraid that one mail must pass without taking you any news of me; but when I return I hope to make amends. We had a great field-day at the Tsung-Li Yamên last week. Railroads, telegraphs, violation of treaties, etc., all the old stories that have been trotted out a hundred times. The Prince of Kung was very nervous and fidgety. He twisted, doubled, and dodged

like a hare. At last when Sir Rutherford had him, as he thought, fairly in a corner, I saw a gleam of hope and joy come over the Prince's face. He had caught a sight of his old friend and refuge in trouble, my eyeglass. In a moment he had pounced upon it, and there was an end of all business. The whole pack of babies were playing with it, and our Chief, who was furious, saw his sermons scattered to the wind. It does not signify, though, for these tricksters will promise anything. It is the performance which is lacking. By the bye, when the Prince of Kung calls at a Legation he leaves a card in the shape of a slip of red paper with his name and title upon it—Kung Chĭn Wang.[1] But he never signs his name to documents; he subscribes them, Wu ssŭ hsin—"No private heart," *i.e.* "disinterested."

A Cantonese named Ma, whom I know and who has come up to Peking on business, was anxious to buy a little Pekingese slave-girl, and I was present at the negotiations. The child, a bright little creature eight years of age, was brought by her parents to Ma's lodging, and as

[1] Wang, a prince; Chĭn Wang, a prince of the first rank who is personally related to the Emperor.

she gave satisfaction, the question resolved itself into one of price, and here the fun began, for the little thing was so keen to go that she eagerly took part with the purchaser in beating down the vendors; and, finally, a bargain was struck at 28 dollars. At that price she was handed over to her new owner, together with a bill of sale, of which here is a translation:—

"This is a deed of sale. Wan Chêng, of the village of Wan Ping, has a child the offspring of his body, being his second daughter and his seventh child, aged eight years. Because his house is poor, cold, and hungry, relying on what has passed between a third person and his wife, he has determined to sell his daughter to one named Ma. He sells her for twenty-eight dollars, every dollar to be worth seven tiaos and a half. The money has been paid over in full under the pen" (*i.e.* at this time of writing). "The girl is to obey her master and to depend upon him for her maintenance. In the event of any difficulties or doubts arising on the part of the girl's family, the seller alone is responsible, it does not regard the buyer. It is to be apprehended that calamities may occur to the child, but that is according as Heaven

shall decree; her master is not responsible. None henceforward may cross the door to meddle in her affairs. This agreement has been made openly face to face. In case of any inquiries being made this document is to serve as proof." (Here follow the signatures or rather marks of the vendor, the middleman, and a third person as witness, and the date.) "The child's birthday is the 11th day of the 6th month, she was born between the seventh and eighth hours."

Ma declares that as soon as the girl is grown up he shall let her marry. He says, "My no wanchee do that black heart pidgin." I believe he will keep his word—it is a matter of business, and in business the southern Chinese trader is scrupulously honest.

As for the child, she was simply in a fever of delight at leaving her parents. I dare say her poor little life had been none too rosy; for what says the proverb? "Better one son, though deformed, than eighteen daughters as wise as the apostles of Buddha."

I wonder whether any European ever witnessed such a transaction before.

I have been spending the last few days

chiefly in Paternoster Row, the Liu Li Chang, sitting at the feet of a very learned little Chinese Gamaliel, who tells me wonderful stories about the arts and the old craftsmen of China. He is a bookseller by trade, but being a great connoisseur, he always has a few rare specimens of cloisonné enamel, jade, rock crystal, cornelian, or porcelain in his shop. He is never weary of telling how the Emperor Ching Tâi (A.D. 1450) used to work at cloisonné enamel (like Louis XVI. at locks, and Peter the Great at boat-building); how some even say that he even invented the art, to which the Chinese still give his name, calling it Ching Tâi Lan, Ching Tâi's blue; how the great family of potters, the Langs, died out in the beginning of the seventeenth century, carrying their secrets with them to the grave, and how ever since that time the Chinese have been trying to discover their methods—but all in vain—only producing, instead of a wonderful *sang de bœuf* of so soft a paste that it looks as if you might scoop it out with a spoon, the, as he calls them, inferior imitations, to which the French gave the name of Céladon Jaspé, and which the great metal workers, such as Caffieri, used to delight in

mounting. Cloisonné enamel, by the bye, went out of fashion at the end of the last century, and the Chinese ceased to make it; but when, after the sacking of the Summer Palace, the specimens looted there and sent home fetched such wonderful prices in London and Paris, they routed out the drawers in which their forbears had carefully locked their recipes—for a Chinaman never destroys anything—and soon the market will be flooded with new work. The first specimen was brought to me at the Legation the other day, and very good it was.

The rose-backed plates and cups dear to the keen-eyed loungers at Christie's can never have been the fashion at Peking, where men chiefly love the brave colours and bold designs of the artists of the Ming dynasty, and where purses are opened wide for ever so small a piece of the thickly glazed ware of the days of the Yuan and the Sung. From Kâng Hsi's reign to the end of Chien Lung's, A.D. 1796, one seems to feel the Jesuit, or European, influence in the substitution of arabesques for the old barbaric designs. The great age for art in China and Japan, as in Europe, was the cinque cento; the meanest, the dawn of the nineteenth century.

LETTER XXVI

PEKING, *23rd May* 1866.

I RETURNED from my Mongolian expedition last Friday, the 18th, half-starved and burnt to a cinder, but very jolly. I copy my journal for you.

We left Peking, the doctor and I, on the 23rd April. We took with us my servant Chang Hsi, groom, and fat cook. We of course rode our own horses, while five mules carried the servants and baggage. The doctor's dog Drujok, a half-bred Russian setter, and my Prince, a heavy shambling puppy whom I call a Newfoundland, but whose *seize quartiers* it would be difficult to prove, made up the party. Our cavalcade made a great sensation in the streets of Peking. "Here's a game," shouted the street-arabs, piggish in many respects besides their tails; "look at the devils and the devil dogs!" We went out at the Tê Shêng Mên (Victory Gate). So soon as we had

passed the dusty streets and suburbs obstructed by carts and camels, whose bells and dull tramp irritate one's ears, while the dust they shuffle up blinds and chokes one, the ride became delightful. The fresh green of the budding trees and young spring crops and the tints of the distant hills were new life to eyes tired with the monotonous grays of a Peking winter. It was a lovely day too, bright, sunny, and cooled by a fresh breeze from the mountains.

Former experience of carts had decided me to take mules; but it was out of the frying-pan into the fire. Carts are slow, mules are slower. If one takes carts the servants are sure to stow away one ragamuffin at least to help them with their work and add to the expense. If one takes mules the muleteer is sure to add a number of mules carrying wares for trade at the different towns, which creates endless delays. Besides, the pack-mules cannot keep up with the horses, and it is no joke to arrive at an inn, tired and hungry, with the choice of ordering a bad Chinese dinner, or waiting three hours for the cook to come up and prepare a better one. Being in advance, we always had to find our own way from place to place; easy

enough if one could even get a direct answer, but you might as well expect that from a Reading Quaker.

Englishman—"I borrow a light from your intelligence."

Native—"Hao shwo! You are very polite."

E.—"How far is it from here to Sha-Ho?"

N.—"How far is it from here to Sha-Ho? Oh! you're going to Sha-Ho, are you?"

E.—"Yes! How far is it?"

N.—"How far from here, eh? What are you going to do at Sha-Ho?"

E.—"Just going for an excursion. But how far is it?"

N.—"Just going for an excursion, eh?"

This sort of thing goes on until you thoroughly lose your temper, seeing which an old man in the crowd holds up his forefinger and thumb in an oracular manner. This to the initiated signifies that Sha-Ho is eight (not two) li distant (the li is about one-third of a mile). The Chinese have a way of counting with their fingers, which is as necessary to learn as the numerals of the spoken language. They constantly answer a question of figures by holding up one hand without speaking.

Up to five it is all plain sailing, but beyond that it is not so easy. The thumb and little finger mean *six;* thumb and two first fingers, *seven;* thumb and forefinger, *eight;* forefinger crooked, *nine;* second finger doubled over forefinger, or whole hand shown, first palm and then back, *ten.*

We passed our first night at Chang-ping-chou, which was a slight roundabout, but my companion wanted to see the Ming tombs about which I wrote to you last autumn. We found all the inns full, but a small beggar boy, who, possibly with an eye to copper cash, took a great interest in our proceedings, led us to a neat little inn outside the walls where we were quiet and cleanly lodged.

24th April.

We had all the trouble in life this morning to get the mules to start. Threats of stoppages of pay were the only means of acting on the muleteers. Even so we only got off by eight o'clock. The doctor and I, accompanied by my man Chang Hsi, were to visit the tombs, while the mules, not being supposed capable of deriving either profit or amusement from the sight, were

to precede us to Nan-Kŏu, and there wait our arrival. The valley of the tombs was not so bright and rich as when I saw it with the autumn crops in all their luxuriance, but there were plenty of wild-flowers, dog-violets, wild iris, convolvulus, and others, and the persimmon trees were a mass of bloom. The avenue of monstrous statues appeared tame to me in the glare of day after having seen their weird and ghostly appearance by moonlight, but the site and buildings must always be striking. There are plenty of temples and palaces in and near Peking as large and as magnificent, but none in such good proportion; they all look like "imitation" by the side of the Thirteen Tombs.

We had to ride back to within a few hundred yards of Chang-ping-chou before we could reach the sandy and stony road which leads to Nan-Kŏu. It was burning hot, but as the Russians say, "Heat breaks no bones," and with fresh, pure air to breathe it does not much signify how hot it is. In Peking it is another matter. We reached Nan-Kŏu at 2 P.M. The little town is prettily situated at the bottom of the famous pass to which it gives its

name. Steep cliffs enclose it on either side; a stream of clear water—rare sight in these parts—passes through it; and the cottages in the valley are surrounded by trees and corn-fields. The hills are wild and bold, with here and there bits of wall, towers, and perhaps a temple or shrine on the ridges. The constant tinkling of camel and mule bells testifies to the amount of traffic. Every other house is an inn, and all seem bustling and prosperous. There was plenty of movement and plenty of noise in our inn-yard; muleteers, carters, foot-pads, poultry, and asses kept up a perpetual wrangling, crowing, and braying, while an improvisatore in the kitchen opposite was earning his night's board and lodging by reciting tales of an unedifying character for the benefit of the host and his guests of lower degree. Although we had arrived so early, we thought it better to stop the night at Nan-Kŏu and go on in the morning, so we had time for a stroll among the hills after dinner.

25th April.

We started at six, riding donkeys in order to spare the ponies the rough work of the pass.

The Nan-Kŏu pass is certainly in its way very fine. The valley, which is a gradual ascent, is bounded on either side by steep, abrupt hills, as barren and wild as a Scotch glen; a few trees stud it at intervals, and a narrow thread of water runs through it. There are plenty of shrines about, and always perched upon cliffs so steep that one is lost in wonder how they ever got there. Amongst these I noticed a form of sacred monument that was new to me, but constantly repeated along this road—five white-washed earthen cones like sugar-loaves, with bats [1] or other emblems rudely painted on them; I guess that they represent the five offerings exposed on Buddhist altars. As an instance of the difficulty of obtaining reliable information, and to show how cautiously travellers' statements about China must be accepted, I asked three respectable Chinese by the road what was the meaning of these five cones. One said that they were to keep off foxes and wolves, another that they marked every five li along the road, and the third that they were Bud-

[1] "Fu," a bat, by a pun, also means happiness. "Wu fu," the five bats, or five happinesses, are a common emblem in Chinese ornamentation.

dhist emblems, but he did not know what they represented. The pass itself, considering that it is the highway between Mongolia and China, is a very miracle of bad roads. It is as if nature had in some stupendous convulsion burst a passage through the mountains, leaving all the débris in the most glorious confusion, which man has been too idle to reduce to order. Huge boulders of rock at every step obstruct a way which is difficult enough already, and the overhanging cliffs seem as if they were on the point of throwing down more masses to block up the road. Asses are far the best mounts for this work. Ours carried us capitally, urged by constant revilings from their rascally drivers. "Egg of a turtle! what are you stopping for!" is the mildest of their adjurations, the turtle not being used as significative of slowness, but as an euphemism for cuckold. There are plenty of villages in the pass; the inhabitants do a small trade in tea, hard-boiled eggs, and lao-pings (a sort of girdle-cake), which they sell to wayfarers. There is one very pretty little town, Chu-Yung-Kwan, with a curious old gate-way richly carved with quaint figures and inscriptions in Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and

Thibetan, said to be a relic of the Yuan or Mongol dynasty. At the top of the pass, just before the slight descent which leads to the plateau on the west, is an old ruined fortified enclosure called Pa Ta Ling, "the eight great peaks." It is a curious place, for the inside is literally a heap of ruins and rubbish, while the walls and fortifications are almost perfect.

We breakfasted at Cha Tao at the end of the pass, some 15 miles, and very tiring miles too, from Nan-Kŏu. After Cha Tao the road lies along a sandy plain, probably once a lake, to Hwai Lai Hsien, a pretty model of a Chinese town, with crenelated walls and quaint towers. East of the town is a small river, spanned by what once has been a handsome five-arched bridge, now of course falling into ruin and decay. Hard by, on a low hill, stands a temple like an Italian monastery. We put up for the night at Hwai Lai Hsien, having ridden some 35 miles from Nan-Kŏu. We had some difficulty in finding an inn. The people of the east side of the town sent us to the west, and the people of the west incited us to go back to the east. The mules and servants were behind us, and

we were left entirely to our own resources. At last my horse decided the question by bolting down a courtyard, which turned out to be that of the best inn in the place, but which, it having no signboard, I had missed.

26th April.

We had a dullish ride to-day to Hsin Pao An, passing a few small towns, all fortified, probably against Mongol invasions; at one of these, Tu Mu, we made our mid-day halt. Hsin Pao An is a very pretty little town. One Chinese town is generally so like another that if you have seen one you have seen all. Here, however, there is a very curious building in the middle of the place; it is a sort of compromise between an English town-hall, a mediæval fortress, and a Chinese temple; it gives a distinction to the town. It is so very rare to see a drunken man in China that it is almost worth recording that one rushed into our rooms here, and was proceeding to lay hands on the doctor, who shook him off in great astonishment, when the people of the inn came in and turned him out, with many apologies for the annoyance.

27th April.

The main feature in the plain on leaving Hsin Pao An is a steep mountain, or rather precipitous and jagged rock, perhaps 800 or 1000 feet high, called Nei Nei Shan. It stands at the western end of the plain, immediately to the east of the Yang Ho, "sheep river," which winds beneath it. On the very summit of this rock is a temple, about which there is a legend which reminds one of Rolandseck and Nonnenwerth. A prince of these parts had engaged to throw a bridge over the river in a single night, or forfeit his life. He set about his task, but when the sun rose in the morning the work was unfinished, so in despair and in fulfilment of his vow he threw himself into the river and was drowned. His widow erected this temple that she might pass her life in mourning in constant sight of the spot where her husband had disappeared. I have the very worst authority for this legend, of which, by the bye, Bell gives another version quoted by Michie. The Chinese about the place have never heard of it; however, I dare say it is as true as most other legends; at any rate there

stand the hill and the temple, and there live (heaven knows how) five priests, exposed to the full glare of the sun, and to every cold wind that blows, and obliged to fetch even the water they drink up an almost inaccessible height from the plain below. This day's journey, following the Yang Ho in a north-westerly direction, was very picturesque and varied, but often rocky to a degree. However, our little Mongol horses behaved like goats; they never stumble except on a flat road, where they get careless and lazy. There is plenty of coal in these hills, which is worked in the meanest manner and sent to Peking on camels. A geologist who has examined this part of China, and especially the mountains to the west, affirms it to be the richest coalfield in the world, but the Chinese do not take advantage of it. We met plenty of travellers of all degrees, the richer ones travelling in mule litters, a mode of conveyance which looks to me as if it might bring on sea-sickness; and numberless caravans laden with tea for Russia.

We rested at a poor little town called Hsiang Shui Pu, and put up for the night at Hsuan Hua Fu, a large district city. Here

in the suburbs we found an inn which was a palace compared with those we had put up in hitherto, though an English labourer's cottage would not suffer by contrast with the room I slept in. A certain amount of new paper in the windows gave a promise of cleanliness and decency within that was not fulfilled by the broken brick floor and musty tables and benches; however, there were plenty of shabby, tawdry lanterns, and if characters of good omen could give appetite and a good night's rest, we ought to have eaten like ogres and slept like the Seven Sleepers. We were a good deal lionised here; indeed, the inquisitiveness of the people was very troublesome. As I was lathering my face before dinner, trying to get rid of the deposit of two or three sandstorms, the curse of travellers in North China, a carter walked coolly into my bedroom smoking his pipe, and went into fits of laughter at the sight. I, irritated by the intrusion, flung the contents of my soapy sponge into his face—which must have very much astonished it, for it was much in the same state as the fists of the Irish boatman two years after he had shaken hands with the Lord Lieutenant; and my enemy

fled howling. Presently another gentleman appeared who addressed me as "Venerable Teacher"—a high compliment—and informed me that his name was Ma, and that he was a merchant of caps travelling from west to east; after which he retired, but shortly put his head in again to ask my honourable name and nation, and I heard him afterwards in the yard explaining to a knot of carters, muleteers, and loungers, that I was the English teacher Mi, that I understood good manners, that my body was all over pockets, and that my years were not few; which statements the auditors received with many grunts and eructations and repeated several times, afterwards one by one sauntering up to judge for themselves. I happened to be emptying my pockets at the time of Ma's visit. Pockets are not used by the Chinese; they have, it is true, purses or pouches at their girdle, but they are very small. The chief receptacle for miscellaneous articles is the boot. My first teacher used to pull writing materials and sugar-plums indiscriminately from his boot, and always politely offered me the latter before tasting them himself. Old Hêng-Chi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is *malade*

imaginaire and always dosing himself, constantly pulls pills or other pet remedies out of his boot. European pockets are always provocative of wonder. The noises of the inn-yard made sleep out of the question till long past midnight. The worst of all was an old carter wrapped up in his sheepskin, sitting on the shaft of his cart and beating a sort of death-watch with a stick on a piece of hollow bamboo, like a ghoulish old woodpecker. I went out and tried to chaff him out of his performance, but he took my irony for high praise, which so delighted him that he every now and then burst into snatches of song in a high squeaky falsetto, never stopping his eternal devil's tattoo. Mules, asses, horses, and quarrelling Chinamen made up a fitting chorus.

Saturday, 28th April.

Rode through the town of Hsuên Hwa Fu, which, for China, is in tolerable repair. Though small as "Fu's" go, it is pretty enough. There are plenty of trees, chiefly huge willows and poplars, and a great variety of quaint towers, pagodas, and other buildings.

The plain below is busily tilled, and, I should think, must be fertile; but the crops are far behind those of the Peking plain, and the first sowings have not yet put out shoots. Here amongst the numerous by-roads and water-courses we lost our way, being, as usual, far ahead of our mules. Seeing a group of boys working a few fields off I rode across to ask the way; their backs were turned to me, and it was only when I jumped over a low mud wall into the midst of them that they perceived me. A shark appearing in Cuckoo weir while the Eton boys are bathing, could not have produced a greater panic. With one consent the urchins shouted out, "The Devil! The Devil!" and bolted for dear life. At last I succeeded in capturing and calming one of them, sufficiently to discover that we were about an hour and a half's ride out of the right road (no joke to men fasting and under such a sun). The deviation from the regular route accounted for the terror caused by my appearance; the boys had probably never seen a foreigner before.

Late in the afternoon we reached Chang Chia Kǒu, which the Mongols call Khalgan,

the frontier town between China and Mongolia. It is the first great halting-place on the road from Peking to Moscow. Formerly, when the importation of tea into Russia by sea was forbidden, the whole of the tea-supply passed from Tientsing through Chang Chia Kŏu, and there is still a great traffic, but, of course, it is much diminished. The Russians have no important export trade to China. They have a small export trade in cloth, which they manufacture, of a kind and at a cost with which other producers cannot compete, for their cloth exactly suits the Chinese, being of pure wool, very broad, and cheap; but they cannot send it in any large quantity. At Peking, Tientsing, and some of the large towns in North China, there are also to be found miscellaneous articles of Russian manufacture, such as samovars, knives, prints, looking-glasses, etc., but, as a rule, Siberia being a non-manufacturing country and too short-handed to become one, goods have to come from too far for their transport to pay. I believe that the Russians have found their connection with China to be, on the whole, a losing business. They have to pay silver—paper roubles will not pass—for their tea,

and must continue to do so as long as they cannot establish an export trade; they are trying to obtain certain rights of trading in Mongolia, but the Chinese cannot be persuaded of the justice of transferring a monopoly of their own merchants to a powerful neighbour. In the far north they have obtained certain harbours which open the Chinese seas and the Pacific to them; but the harbours are frozen for several months, and the advantage has saddled them with huge tracts of country which it is hard for them to rule, and still harder for want of manual labour to turn to profit. Russia looks to the days of railways and telegraphs through Siberia, which are probably not very far distant,[1] to balance the account. The truth is that the English and Americans are the only people who have a real commercial interest in China. The Russian interest is at present simply one of boundaries. With the French the Chinese question is one of missionaries and jealousy of the *interests* of other nations in the Far East,—*interests* being with French alarmists synonymous with *influence*. The German

[1] I must remind the reader that this was written in 1866.

nations cannot as yet be said to have any great stake here, though they have plenty of subjects in China, principally clerks in great houses or small merchants. Portugal has a very cleverly worded treaty with the Chinese, who will not ratify it because it would cede to her the sovereignty of Macao, where she has a flourishing trade, under the name of Chinese coolie emigration. Spain has a treaty in an embryo state, and conterminal interests on account of her Philippine Islands; and Belgium has a treaty, one resident subject, and a ship trading here once in three years or so. The Danes have a treaty, but little commerce. Italy two or three years ago planned a mission hither, but it broke down. Even should the Russians succeed in obtaining the privileges they are working for in Mongolia, their Chinese trade would be but a drop in the ocean compared with our immense commercial interests.

29th April.

In spite of the remonstrances and even tears of our head muleteer, who predicted certain starvation for ourselves and our mules, we decided on pushing as far as Llama Miao, the

great horse-fair in Mongolia, and returning home *via* Ku Pei Kŏu to vary the journey. We accordingly resolved to stop a day at Chang Chia Kŏu to rest the horses and lay in rice, flour, and other provisions, with provender for the cattle. The delay gave us time to see the bustling little town which trade has redeemed from the dulness of its neighbours. The streets are full of animation. Fortune-tellers, improvisatori, and a company of strolling actors who, gorgeous in stage dresses and burlesque "makes up," have taken possession of a small temple, attract crowds of gaping Mongols and Chinamen. The main street of the suburb resembles a great fair, lined with stalls like cheap-Jack's booths, at which every conceivable sort of rubbish is sold. Pipes, rings, ear-rings, sham jewelry and jade, Mongol knives, purses, cutlery professing to be made by Rodgers and Son, lucifer matches from Vienna, kaleidoscopes, stereoscopes, musical boxes and looking-glasses, with reverses quite unfit for publication, are the chief wares. There is a capital seven-arched bridge, adorned with lions and apes, across the almost dry river; and wonderful to say, it is kept in re-

pair, so you may judge how prosperous the place is and looks. Foreigners excite little attention, for European travellers are often passing; and besides, there are two or three resident agents for Russian houses who superintend the loading of the tea-caravans for Siberia.

One thing necessary before leaving Chang Chia Kŏu was to get the seal of the military authorities attached as a *visa* to my passport. As I told you last year, the petty provincial officers snap their fingers at the seal of the Peking yamêns (public offices), but they respect that of their own immediate chief, whose arm is long enough to reach them. In the event of meeting with any difficulty on the road I could not count on getting any official assistance without this seal. Accordingly, early this morning I sent my passport to the general's office, with the request that it might be returned *visé*. At five o'clock no passport was forthcoming, so I sent to say that I would go in person to fetch it, and requested an interview with his Excellency. When I arrived at the Yamên I was told that the great man himself was ill — the usual excuse — but I was

civilly received by his subordinate, a greasy little blue-buttoned mandarin named Pao, and two others. I repeated my request to see his Excellency Ah (that is his name), as I knew how futile it is to treat with subordinate Chinese officials; but *his* Excellency only renewed his regrets that he could not see *my* Excellency, which he hoped was pretty well. As he might be smoking opium and really unpresentable, I thought it better not to press the matter further, but attacked Pao on the subject of the seal, which he fought off granting me on the ground that there was nothing in the passport saying that I was entitled to it. I answered that the passport entitled me to expect every aid from him, and that last year the Ti-tu of Ku Pei Kŏu had granted us his seal; threatened him with the thunders of the Prince of Kung's wrath, and told him (Heaven forgive me!) how angry our Queen would be if she heard that a member of her Legation, carrying the passport of the Legation, had been snubbed the very first time he asked for assistance from a Chinese official. "Would I like something to eat?" "I was much obliged, but I was not hungry; I wanted the seal." "At least a little

jam?" "Many thanks, no jam, but the seal." "But the seal was really such an unimportant matter." "Then why not give it at once as the Ti-tu had done." (Which, by the bye, he had not done without a fight.) "Oh, but the Ti-tu lived at Ku Pei Kŏu and this was Chang Chia Kŏu. How could it be done?" "Where there's a will there's a way"—which is an excellent Chinese proverb. My interlocutors doubled at every moment like hares, now offering tea, now dinner, now tobacco, anything but the seal. They constantly consulted together in Manchu, of which of course I did not understand a word. Every now and then one went out to report, as I imagine, to the shamming chief what I had said. How obstinate the barbarian was, and how suspicious, for I took care to let them know that I was not gulled by the very stale sick dodge. We were more than an hour marching and countermarching over the same ground. I stuck out for my seal; they persisted in eluding the question. At last I told Pao that I would either accept the seal or a separate pass from his Excellency Ah to his subordinates, but that if they refused to give me one or other I would write to

Peking and complain of their want of courtesy. After some difficulty they agreed to furnish me with a pass, and even gave orders for a draft to be written and sent to the hotel for my approval. I then left them, but with such manifest disgust that they were probably afraid that I might complain of their conduct, for immediately I reached the inn a messenger made his appearance, saying that Pao hoped I was pretty well (which, considering we had just parted, was an excess of courtesy), and had not quite read my passport to his satisfaction; would I let him have it back for a few minutes. Ten minutes after this it was in my hands with the seal attached.

In the meantime our lachrymose muleteers had made off to Peking with their mules, abandoning their pack-saddles and ropes, and forfeiting all their earnings, save an advance which I had made them, rather than face the imaginary horrors of the road to Llama Miao. Here was a pretty kettle of fish! All hopes of an early start completely bowled out; and really Chang Chia Kŏu is a very nice place, but one day is enough of it.

30th April.

The whole of this morning was wasted in fruitless endeavours to get mules or carts. The carters and muleteers, knowing our anxiety to be off, demanded fabulous prices, and absolutely declined to start until to-morrow; we were as determined to make a move to-day. At last, in despair, the doctor rode off to the Russian agents to see whether they could not do something to help us. It is no use applying to the authorities, for their practice in such cases is to be extremely civil and obliging, at once procure the worst and cheapest beasts in the place, arrange for a high price, and pocket the difference; and then when the traveller is a hundred miles or so away from all help a horse or mule dies of a ripe old age, and the others are so feeble and decrepit that he does not reach his destination until his stock of provisions has long been exhausted, and himself has had to suffer days of needless privation and discomfort. During the doctor's absence Chang Hsi, who had gone out as plenipotentiary in another direction, came back with a treaty for ratification between himself, under the style of

"Chang the great Lord," and a hirer of carts, who was willing to convey our baggage to Llama Miao for rather more than double the proper fare. The doctor's negotiations were more successful, for he returned with a wild-looking ruffian, with whom we finally made almost satisfactory arrangements, though neither promising, coaxing, nor threatening would induce him to start until the next day.

1st May.

A short time since a missionary presented me with a copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress* translated into Chinese, and adorned with pictures, in which Christian and the other characters appear with long tails *à la Chinoise*. If any one will produce a similar edition of *Don Quixote* for the benefit of the mandarins, I shall recommend our carter as model for the portrait of the knight. His prominent nose, lantern jaws, and tall, thin, ungainly figure exactly fit the character; it is a type I never before saw in China. Any one of his horses would make a capital Rosinante. We made a late start of it, not getting off until eight o'clock, and even then our people lagged behind in the town to

buy things. At the gate of the town, where the Great Wall of China is the frontier mark, we met with no difficulties, our passports were not examined, and the officials only took down our names and the number of our party. The day's march was dull and monotonous; it lay along a continuously ascending pass, winding between barren hills, which bounded the view. We met strings of camels, mules, and bullock-carts, all laden with tea for Russia and Mongolia. The tea that is imported by the Mongols is of the coarsest quality, and pressed into large bricks, which look something like cavendish tobacco, only coarser, and with stronger fibres to bind them together. These bricks are in some parts the current coin of the country: large transactions are settled for so many bricks of tea, while smaller payments are made by cutting pieces off the block as the Chinese cut fragments of silver. The infusion made from brick tea is coarse and nasty; it often has a musty taste owing to the damp confined in the cakes, which prevents their transport by sea.

We breakfasted at Tu-ting, a miserable little village of mud hovels which at a little distance look like mere holes in the hill; the place

reminded me of a colony of fever-stricken Circassians whom I saw during their exodus two years ago, burrowing like rabbits in a bank near Tchernavoda. Barring the fever there was not much choice in appearance between the two. After Tu-ting the ascent becomes so steep that horses are kept by the wayside, as on the St. Gothard, to draw up heavy carts to a ledge on which stands a temple in honour of Kwan Ti, the god of war, whither pious carters repair to deposit an offering on having successfully made the ascent. Pa Ta, where we passed the night at the sign of the "Ten Thousand Perfections," was hardly richer than Tu-ting. Our beds were made in the kitchen amid flour-bins, jars of oil, pots of stinking cheese, and odds and ends of all sorts. It was the best room of the inn, which was a low hut built of mud and chopped straw, roofed over, but with the bare ground for a floor. This is not comfort, but *à la guerre comme à la guerre.*

2nd May.

A couple of hours more uphill and we were fairly on the Mongolian plateau. A branch of the Great Wall runs along the mountains; but

here it is a mere heap of stones thrown together, a wonderful work of patience, it is true, but lacking the grandeur of the brick-built wall at Ku Pei Kŏu; at intervals are rude turrets fallen or falling into utter decay.

The plateau itself is a vast sea of downs bounded only by the horizon. It is difficult to conceive anything more desolate; there is neither tree nor shrub, nothing taller than a few dwarfish buttercups and campanulas; there is not so much as a stone to sit down upon; for miles and miles there is no trace of human habitation or handiwork; for miles and miles one travels without meeting a soul, except by chance a stray Mongol lumbering heavily along on his camel, or a bullock-cart carrying tea; of beasts we saw a flock of Hwang-yang antelopes, that scampered off almost before there was time to recognise them; the dogs started a fox; a raven was feeding on a dead dog, and a solitary vulture followed in our wake for hours, as if he expected one or other of us to come to grief, but for to-day he was disappointed. We rested at Shi Pa Li Tai, having made an absurdly short day's journey, but it was impossible to stir our Don Quixote into anything like activity.

3rd May.

We rose long before sunrise, intending to make up for lost time. The early morning on the steppes is something beautiful. Flocks of larks, mocking and other birds are singing away as if their throats must burst, the air is as keen and fresh as possible, and there is just a sparkling of dew on the ground. On such a morning and on such ground our little horses, in spite of the journey before them—of which they always seem to have a sort of instinctive knowledge, for when the holsters and head-stalls are put on, the very worst of them sober down and behave well—cannot resist a gallop. They lift their heads, and turning towards the breeze sniff it in by long draughts with a zest that it is good to see, and spin away like mad things over the steppe on which they were born and reared. The dogs catch the infection, and are in the most tearing spirits, careering away far out of sight; Drujok, whose sporting education has been sadly neglected, setting a bad example in a wild lark chase, which my puppy Prince is not slow to follow. Roads across the plateau there are none; and we soon raced

away from all sign of the (at best) puzzling tracks of rare carts and horses. Here was a pretty mess! Lost on the steppe like sailors at sea in a cock-boat without a compass! not a landmark of any sort; a boundless plain with a round horizon! After some while spent in fruitless consultation, to our joy a speck began to rise on the horizon; bigger and bigger it grew, until at last it defined itself into the figure of a very jolly, fat, yellow-robed priest,—a sort of Mongol Friar Tuck riding on his camel,—who could fortunately speak a little Chinese. The good-natured fellow, shaking his sides with laughter at our mischance, put his helm about and rode a mile or two out of his own way to steer us into ours, so that in the end we found ourselves at Pan Shan Tu a couple of hours before our people. As we had started at three in the morning on the strength of a cup of tea and a couple of eggs, and had been eight hours in the saddle, it was rather trying to wait until past one o'clock for a meal. Still more trying was it as the evening closed in, and the gathering clouds warned us that there would be no moonlight to guide us, to find ourselves 25 miles from our destination,

in the middle of the wilderness, and the cart-horses hardly up to 3 miles an hour. Happily we came upon a group of Mongol yurts (huts or tents), and their uncouth owners were willing and able to take us in. Indeed, as I found out afterwards, the huts on this track are almost available as inns for travellers. We were, as usual, in advance of our party and unable to speak a word of Mongol; however, from the yurts there appeared a wild, gaunt figure, which from its wearing ear-rings and long hair, and from no other sign, I knew to be a woman; in the kindliest but roughest manner she seized the horses and led them to a post, to which she tied them, and then opening one of the yurts, beckoned us to go in and warm ourselves, for it was very chilly. In this hut were crowded a few men, women, and naked children, a calf and several lambs, all huddling together round the fire: what an etching Rembrandt would have made of it! The air was stifling; between smoke and strong smells it was almost impossible to breathe; however, the good lady cleared out another hut, which by the time our servants came up was ready for us.

A Mongol yurt is of the simplest construc-

tion. A round, raised floor, from twelve to fifteen feet in diameter, is made of mud and chopped straw; round this is built a wall of trellis-work of laths about four feet high, from which a number of sticks radiate to a point at the top; a thick covering of pieces of felt tied on with strong cord completes the hut; even the trellis-work is fastened by thongs of leather passed through holes made at the point where the laths cross one another. The whole can easily be taken to pieces and packed on a camel's back. The furniture of the interior is not more luxurious than the exterior: in the centre is an iron fireplace, in which is burnt a fire of horse- or cow-dung, which is the only fuel to be procured, and is collected with great pains on the plateau; the smoke, so much at least as does escape, finds its way through a hole in the middle of the roof; four iron bars support over the fire the single pan in which all the cooking of the family is done; round the tent are a few chests and presses of the rudest Chinese manufacture, and the homeliest of brass pots and pans from Peking; a few sheep-skins and calf-skins and pieces of felt represent bed, sofa, and chair; the whole is blackened by

much smoke like a cutty-pipe. A flap of felt serves as door; the hole in the roof is chimney and window in one, and if it rains that must be covered in. Perhaps the quaintest thing about the place, and the strongest sign of the poverty of the land, was the kitchen garden inside the yurt. A basket or pan and a broken teacup, into which a little mould had been placed, were beds in which half a dozen carefully-tended heads of garlic were sprouting! There were no stables; the Mongols do not use them. When they want a horse they go and catch one out of the herd. Our horses were tied up to stakes outside. The cattle keep near the camp of their own accord; the sheep are packed under a shed, so they enjoy a covering; but the young things—calves, lambs, and kids—are carried into the yurts and sleep with the other children. Such was our lodging for the night, and, tired as we were, it did well enough for us. Our dinner was a more difficult matter; our cook did his best for us, but he was sorely put to it for saucepans and other requisites. As I said above, the pan or caldron over the dung-fire is the whole Mongol *batterie de cuisine*. Into it is thrown a quantity of millet or other grain

and a few lumps of fat mutton or beef, which is stewed in water. When the solid part of this has been taken out, the greasy water which remains serves to make the infusion of brick tea. Even the lowest Chinese cannot stomach this nasty mess, and speak of it with the greatest disgust. In some parts of Mongolia an infusion of brick tea is made with boiling milk and salt, and always kept ready in the yurt. This is said to be very good. I had been looking forward to getting a drink of fresh milk, but the Mongols all say that their cows have died. Calves a few days old, and in very good condition, tell another story.

When we had established ourselves in the yurt, the head of the encampment, introduced by the Meg Merrilies who had taken us in and done for us, and whom I imagine to have been his wife, came to visit us. He spoke a little Chinese, which is necessary to him when he goes to Chang Chia Kŏu to sell his cattle. He told us he was a military officer, but without soldiers to command. Of the world beyond Chang Chia Kŏu on one side and Llama Miao on the other he knew nothing. His flocks and his tents were his whole life. The women,

young and old, had no objection to showing themselves; they came to look at us, and brought their children, whom we made happy with cakes and white sugar. Round-faced, flat-featured, healthy, dirty, and ugly are the women; as for the men, sun, wind, and weather have burnt and hardened them to a degree in comparison with which the most weather-beaten old sea-dog at Portsmouth or Plymouth is satin-skinned. Men and women alike are dressed in long sheep-skin robes, with the wool worn inwards, and round fur caps. Their shapeless dresses and round head-pieces remind one of the family in the Noah's arks. The people appear very jolly and simple, which they are, and very honest, which report says they are not. Small articles to which they may take a fancy are said to disappear mysteriously. The Mongolian dogs, several of whom guard each encampment, to the great discomfiture of Drujok and Prince, who, on the prowl after water, are constantly attacked by them, are fine beasts—huge, shaggy fellows, mostly black-and-tan, with glorious tails curling over their backs; they must be awkward customers. In spite of the squalor in which our hosts live,

they are rich people in their way, and well-to-do; dirt and wretchedness must be with them a matter of choice, not necessity, for their thriving flocks find a ready market at Chang Chia Kŏu for the supply of Peking. Things which are of the most ordinary necessity to the poorest Chinaman these comparatively prosperous people do without. They have not even a teapot or tea-cup; and when we suggested washing our faces a rusty old iron basin was dragged out of some corner where it must have lain unused and forgotten for months.

It blew a gale of wind in the night, and rain came on, so we were able to test the comfort of the tent. We suffered neither from cold nor rain; in fact, nothing could be better adapted than these huts for the extreme weather of the steppe. If it is fine you can sleep with the sky above you. If it is cold the felt is a sufficient protection. It was bitterly chilly outside, but within, although we could not bear a fire on account of the smoke, we were as warm as toasts.

4th May.

A pelting wet morning. We took leave of our friends the Mongols, and rode to Chang-

ma-tsze-chin, a Chinese colony, some twenty miles off, it being too bad weather to push farther. We made friends with the whole village through its children. A pedlar happened to be passing that way, and by investing a few pence in small looking-glasses and such toys, we made the little boys and girls very happy. To these the pedlar's pack of rubbish contained all the wonders of Aladdin's palace, for had he not come all the way from Peking? Our door at the inn was thronged with jolly little urchins for the rest of the day, and we amused ourselves and them by showing them our watches, pencil-cases, etc. The plains or valleys here are narrower and surrounded by hills. I climbed one height, from which I had a fine view over the steppe.

5th May.

The beauty of the morning made up for yesterday. We were up by 3 A.M. The vapours of the night before had settled down in dew on the ground, the sun was rising brilliantly among fleecy clouds, which continued all day to throw over the hills lights and shades such as one sees in Europe—never at Peking, where

the sky must either be black with storm, or deep blue without a speck upon it. We stopped to breakfast at a Mongol encampment, on the near side of an immense plain. I never saw so many horses at one time in my life—the plateau was literally alive with them ; they were very shaggy in their winter coats, and did not show to advantage on the poor commons they had had to put up with during the winter ; but some of them were well built for strength and endurance, with deep chests, strong quarters, and big barrels. We were received in the yurt of a widow, named Apakwai, a most ill-favoured dame ; however, her tent was the best in the place, and the cleanest, which is not high praise. She was rich in furniture, skins, and felt mats, and there was even some little attempt at decoration about her habitation, a few Chinese prints of the rudest kind and most defiant of perspective being pasted on the trellis walls ; they were coloured in the garish style so pleasing to Mongols, who are far more Oriental in this respect than the sober Chinese. A Mongol swell, riding over the plain, gorgeous in yellow and vermilion, and with his jolly moon face beaming out of a yellow cap, red-buttoned

and trimmed with sables, is a sight to see. The ladies are great customers with the Peking jewellers for coral, pearls, and jade ornaments. A woman, be she never so poor, is sure to have some piece of finery in the way of ear-rings or head-dress from Peking. If she cannot afford real jewellery she buys sham.

The widow Apakwai could speak no Chinese, but as every one about the camp came in to idle away an hour, we had no lack of interpreters. The chief personage spoke Chinese fluently. Apakwai lost her husband in the war of 1860, where the Mongols were always sent to the front to be shot at, and really, with such a wife, he was lucky to get out of the world. She had a most villainous expression of countenance, only exceeded in ugliness by her familiar spirit, a little dog of preternatural hideousness, with a hunch on his back and a revolting human face. I tried to conciliate him with "po-po," Chinese cakes, which he accepted with avidity, and even condescended to sit up and beg for like a Christian dog, but so soon as my store was exhausted he snapped at me as spitefully as ever. The old lady had other familiar spirits even more disgusting, of whose

presence she gave evidence by much unbuttoning of robes and scratching. The widow was very eager for cigars and white sugar, which we could not spare her, and as she sat smoking her pipe and grumbling over the money our servants had paid her for the use of her yurt, she was the picture of greed and avarice. I added to her gains, but even that did not satisfy her. Altogether, if I had a pound of cigars, a loaf of sugar, and a purseful of money, I should be sorry to sleep alone in her yurt. I should dream of Jael and Sisera all night.

At about two or three miles, at a guess, N.W. of the camp stands a large temple, Ma Shên Miao, the temple of the horse spirit, most appropriately placed and dedicated; with my field-glass I could see large trees, leafless as yet, in its enclosure, the only trees that we have seen since Chang Chia Kŏu. Their size shows that the temple is old, for of course they must have been planted there by the monks. Between the camp and Shang-tu-ho, where we slept, the plain was boundless in length, and confined at the sides by picturesque heights coloured by every variety of light and shade. The distance

gave us the most perfectly deceptive mirage I ever saw. It was exactly like a vast lake, the hill spurs running out into it like promontories, and forming bays and creeks. Near Shang-tu-ho we passed by the roadside four stakes driven into the ground, to each of which was attached a cage containing the head of a man in a frightful state of decomposition. The tail of one had escaped from between the bars of the cage, and was dangling to and fro mournfully in the wind. They were the heads of four Chinese highwaymen, once the terror of the road; now, poor wretches, they can only frighten the horses, who may well shy at so ugly a sight. We saw large flocks of Hwang-yang antelopes, but they disappear like white clouds into space, and there is no chance of getting a shot at them.

6th May.

By way of a change, and to spare my old pony Kwandu, whose turn it was for duty, I walked the first stage, some sixteen miles or more, to Ta Liang Ti. Two miles to the west of the road we passed the Wang-ta-jên-Miao, the temple of his Excellency Wang, the

burial-place of a Mongol chieftain of that name, where, as the carter told me, reside the officers in charge of an Imperial establishment for breeding horses. A little excitement was added to the second half of the day by our being warned of a band of "chi-ma-tseih," horse brigands, who infest the neighbourhood. The Mongols of a large encampment near Ta Liang Ti have been waging war against them ; yesterday they caught four, the day before eight, all of whom will be sent to Chang Chia Kŏu for trial. The heads we saw yesterday belonged to four of their troop. The ground is admirably adapted for their operations. The track skirts a number of low hills, among which they hide, pouncing out upon travellers who are too weak in numbers to offer resistance. The people about are really panic-stricken, and no single cart ventures on the road. An additional cause of fear is that these brigands are Shantung men, who have the reputation of being very terrible. The deuce a tail of a robber did we see, but we met a Mongol armed to the teeth and carrying his long pole and rope for horse-catching—a most powerful engine against a mounted robber—who asked me, in what the Mrs. Mala-

prop of Peking used to call "broken china," whether I had seen any brigands, saying that he was one of a party out on the war-trail after them. I could only wish him "good luck with his fishing." We slept at Ha Pa Chiao, where, as at Ta Liang Ti, the people were especially civil.

7th May.

To-day we "received bitters unsurpassable," as the Chinese say when they come to grief—thirty-five miles' ride at a foot-pace, for we could not leave the baggage in a storm of wind, rain, thunder and lightning, which regularly pursued us. The sandy soil was so heavy that the cart-wheels could hardly turn; the horses were quite exhausted. About two miles from Llama Miao, where the storm had lashed itself to its greatest fury, we came to a small plateau surrounded by low hills. Here we witnessed a phenomenon, new to me, and which I certainly never wish to see again. The thunder, which seemed to circle round the hills, roared savagely and cracked with deafening peals, while the lightning ran along the ground criss-crossing in every direction until the little plain

was covered with a perfect network of blue liquid flames, from the meshes of which escape seemed impossible. The effect on the horses was indeed electric. Mine stood still and shivered with fear, breaking out into a white lather of sweat, while the doctor's, with a scream, bolted madly into space, fortunately taking the direction of the town. It was a weird scene, befitting a witch's Sabbath. A thunderstorm in Mongolia is indeed a trial to one's nerves. To put the finishing touch to our misery, when we arrived at Llama Miao drenched, cold, and hungry, inn after inn refused to take us in, and we were for near an hour riding through the wet streets, the people howling at us, and a whole pack of curs yelping and snapping at our dogs. At last we found an asylum in a large but wretched inn ; the last tenants of the rooms we occupied had been horses, and my bedroom was also used as a cart-house. We were a good deal mobbed ; a foreigner here is a *rara avis*, and we created no small sensation, every dirty ragamuffin in the place crowding into the yard. What excites the greatest astonishment is that we are travelling for no business. To leave all one's comforts

and ride four hundred miles for pleasure beats their comprehension, and the Chinese are convinced that the barbarian has a bee in his bonnet.

8th May.

Llama Miao is a large Chinese colony in the midst of a sandy desert, four or five thousand feet above the level of the sea. The Mongols call it Talonoru, which the Russians have softened into Dolonor. The Chinese name, which means "llama's temple," is taken from two huge monasteries of llamas, "the old temple" and "the new temple," which stand by the side of a small stream outside the town. They are rather villages than temples, however, and contain, as the landlord and other natives told me, several thousand llamas. We were unable to go into them, for the river, swollen by the rain, was impassable; but we did not much regret this, for all the temples have a strong family likeness, and we have both had our fill of big Buddhas and dirty shaven monks with idiotic faces (the llamas are by far the lowest type in China), out of whom there is not even any information about their fraternity

to be got, for if you ask them some question touching their order, it is ten to one that they will reply by another about your clothes. We contented ourselves with a distant view of the Miao. In size, but in nothing else, they reminded me of the Troitzkaia Lavra near Moscow, which is also quite a small city.

The Mongols flock to Llama Miao to sell their horses, cattle, wool, and raw hides to the Chinese, who, in return, supply them with corn of all kinds, and such simple manufactured necessaries as the Mongols require for their camps, at between three and four times Peking prices. A measure of corn, which costs 100 cash in Peking, costs $3\frac{1}{2}$ times that amount here. This trade, for the landlord says there is no other, has been sufficiently attractive to convert Llama Miao into a town, 6 li (2 miles) long by 4 li ($1\frac{1}{3}$ mile) broad, and densely peopled. We passed a dreary day, shivering in our fur coats. We saw no good horses for sale, but one fine little gray pony, private property, was brought to a farrier's opposite, and bled in the street. I have since heard that there is a great business done in bronze idols.

9th May.

We had a better chance of seeing the town and horse-fair as we rode through to-day. Yesterday the rain had made business dull, but to-day there were hundreds of little horses for sale; their owners were leading them about, strung together in packs, or galloping them madly about, to show off their paces, to the great danger of the mob, and especially of the small boys, who were scattered from under one horse's feet to another's, but always escaped by a miracle. The show was bad in quality, for the best horses are not brought in until the summer or autumn. Our horses, from their superior grooming and feeding, were much admired, but our saddlery received an ovation. "Ai ya!" said an old Chinese horse-dealer, passing a dirty thumb over my saddle, "a man may grow old in these parts over the border, and never see such a saddle as that! Unsurpassable!" Besides the horsey gentlemen, there is a large population of craftsmen, such as ropemakers, basketmakers, shoemakers, and the like. With the exception of a few large well-built places of business, which have even

some pretension to ornamental architecture, the houses are small and poor. Altogether, Llama Miao is not a place worth a visit on its own account; we merely took it as a good point to reach and turn back from. If it had not been for the fact that we were riding back to Peking, I should not have been sorry to leave it.

We stopped at a small roadside inn for breakfast. The people were such a contrast to the town-folk, who are always impertinent and obstructive. The villagers are simple creatures, and so civil and obliging. Sitting on a bench outside the inn was a very small boy, dirty to a degree, but excessively pretty, feeding his younger brother of three years old with a sort of macaroni, which he was stuffing down his throat with chop-sticks; the father, a good-humoured countryman, was sitting hard by, resting and smoking his pipe. I gave the little fellow a sixpence, which he so sweetly made over to the younger child. As I sat chatting with these people up rode a well-dressed Chinese, followed by his servant also on horseback. He stopped, called for a cup of tea, drank it, and went off without paying. I saw that my friends loved him as a mouse does a

cat, and asked who he was. He turned out to be a customs officer. "A terrible fellow," said one; "if travellers don't bribe him, he stops them, and takes their luggage, swearing that they are smuggling." The respect which the Chinese have for their rulers is truly touching. Our charioteer made me promise to-day to give him a pass from the Legation when we reach Peking, without which, and perhaps in spite of which, he, being a countryman, would be mulcted at the gate on his return home.

About twenty miles from Llama Miao, at a place called Shui-Hsien-Tszŭ, the sandy plain ends, and the character of the scenery changes completely.

The road winds down a steep ravine between hills and rocks of every variety of shape; a tiny torrent follows the same line. There are a few trees, leafless as yet, and here and there the lower hills are tilled. Cottages are plentiful, and the number of travellers shows that we are on the high-road to Peking. We passed the night at Kou Mên Tzŭ. The people were as civil as possible, but very inquisitive, examining all our belongings with childish curiosity. They were above all delighted with my field-

glass, through which they begged to be allowed to look. They took the greatest care of it, and if any one was too eager the others shouted, "Don't snatch, don't snatch." It was given back to me by the elder of the party, who said with the greatest gravity, "Venerable teacher, you have opened our eyes," and then proceeded to lecture upon us for the benefit of a party of new-comers. "What are you come to sell?" said one, interrupting the lecture. "Sell things!" shouted my exhibitor indignantly; "what thing are you? He don't sell things; he's an officer like our chih hsien!"—which office is promotion for a brass-buttoned mandarin of a rank about equal to a parish beadle. Popular enthusiasm reached its height when I pulled out an old number of the *Saturday Review* and began to read. I can now realise the feelings of a giant in a caravan, travelling from place to place and being shown wherever he goes.

10th May.

Below Kou Mên Tzŭ runs a mountain stream, over which there is a rude bridge supported on fascines filled with rubbish and loose stones. The village, from the left bank of the river,

looks very picturesque, and there is a temple on the hillside that is a little gem in its way. After ascending the river for some little distance we dived into another mountain gorge, more beautiful and wild than that of yesterday. The rocks are bolder and more striking, and the hillsides are covered with a dwarf wild fruit tree bearing a pink flower as brilliant as the wild rhododendron of the Alps. There are a few tender shoots, too, on the stunted trees and shrubs, which, with the mosses and lichens covering the different strata of rocks, add colour to the landscape. As the road is a perpetual zigzag one is constantly coming upon fresh surprises and new forms. To-day's ride would have been perfect had it not been for a storm of wind and sand which destroyed our pleasure. We rested at Hung Túng Tien, and our abode for the night was at Lao Wo Pú, a quiet little place, where the inn, which stands at a turn of the road, is perfectly circled by hills, as if it were in a devil's punch-bowl. As we sat in the pretty inn-yard we agreed that in spite of bad weather and cold (we had found ice in several places) we had seldom enjoyed a day more. One advantage gained over our previous

days was that by loitering on the way and stopping to "sit a sit and rest a rest" in different cottages, where we were always made welcome, we managed to arrive at the inn after our servants instead of before. It is such a bore having to look after the cleaning of the rooms and the stabling of the horses in the midst of a gaping crowd of wonderers.

11th May.

Descending the pass the valley widens; the mountain streamlet becomes quite a river, which we have to cross over and over again; it is very rapid, and at the fords the water reaches to the horses' girths. The ground here is carefully tilled, and well irrigated as it is, must be fertile. I saw a jolly old couple cultivating their little field together: the old man was painfully working out furrows with a hoe, while his wife, stumping along on her small feet, sowed the seed out of a wooden vessel, with a spout like a watering-pot, which she tapped with a stick to let the grain fall out by degrees. I hope they may have a good harvest. Our two resting-places were Kwa Ti Erh and Kwo Chia Tûn, a large village with particularly dis-

agreeable inhabitants, whose practice it is to eat much garlic and then breathe in the face of travellers. The sand-storm this afternoon was one of the worst I have seen. It blinded us and threw a yellow pea-soup fog over scenery that is as beautiful as mountains and river can make it.

12th May.

We were warned last night to be on our guard and look out for brigands, but nothing came of it. This morning we turned off into another pass steering south-west. Here we had a change in the landscape, for the hills were covered with trees and brushwood, showing more green as we got farther south. The people cried wolf again about robbers, but they do not seem to fancy attacking Europeans; the bore of it is that we are bound to do escort duty and stick to the cart, which would not be safe without us and our revolvers. The Chinese are in mortal terror of them, so a bumbailiff from the Chih-hsien's yamên at Fêng Ming Hsien begged us to let him travel with us for company and protection. He had been all the way to Kou Mên Tzŭ on foot to claim a debt of six taels

(£2). He told me he was between fifty and sixty years old, and had been a confirmed opium-smoker for twenty years and more, smoking regularly twice a day, once after each meal. He was as hale and hearty as need be, walking his thirty miles a day with a heavy pack on his back, for, with an eye to the main chance, he was going to combine with his official business a little peddling trade on his own account—a fresh proof that opium if not taken in large quantities is not so enervating after all. As for its effect on the mind, some of the cleverest Chinese are habitual smokers. I must say that I have never seen anything which bears the faintest resemblance to the horrors of opium-smoking described in books. This man told me that opium still gave him delicious dreams, but said he regretfully, "It's all folly, they never come true." Our first fifteen miles lay along very broken ground—terrible work for the horses—but so picturesque, that if any brigands had appeared I should have expected them to come out decked in ribands and tall hats like Mr. Tupman. A common crowd of Chinese ragamuffins would have been sadly out of tune.

One descent that we had to make was so abrupt that I fully expected our heavy baggage-cart to come down with a run; however, the carter showed his ingenuity, and improvised a drag with a huge log of wood which he lashed behind the cart, fastening it to the axletree with a tourniquet; this made an effective but not very lasting break; as the wheels wore through the wood he tightened the tourniquet, and so brought the cart safe to the bottom. From the top of the pass we had a magnificent panorama of mountains, range rising above range, north and south, in huge fantastic masses, with dark foreground and melting blue distances. Beneath us to the south lay a little hill-girt valley green with young wheat and trees almost in full leaf, a little Eden in the wilderness. At the farther end of this valley is a pretty hamlet called Niu Chuên Tzŭ, where we breakfasted in a clean, tidy inn. We had now travelled over a hundred miles through narrow mountain passes, but soon after we had left Niu Chuên Tzŭ our road opened out into a valley so broad as to be almost a plain. The sun was setting and lighting up the mountains that separated us from China as we rode into Fêng Ming Hsien,

a pleasant town to look at, but to us very inhospitable; the best inns rejected us, and we were so mobbed and persecuted after we had found a resting-place, that I was obliged to appeal to the executive to get the inn-yard cleared. The executive made its appearance in the shape of a large and very dirty gentleman with an unkept tail, who by dint of a deal of threatening and bad language procured for us peace and quiet.

13th May.

Of course, because our inn was particularly dirty and bad, the innkeeper was proportionately extortionate. He was evidently a bad character and rather fallen in the world, and had taken us in, in spite of prejudices which he shared with the rest of his fellow-townsmen, in order to make a profit out of us. We were glad to be quit of him, the inn, and the town. Our mid-day halt was at a very different sort of place, a little village called Shou Hu Ying, which takes its name from a tradition that the famous Emperor, Kang Hsi, once came here a-hunting, and killed a tiger on the spot where the village now stands. There was only one

inn, humble enough, but very clean, and a few pots of flowers in the principal room gave it an air of smartness. The guest-room also served as village school, of which all the paraphernalia were scattered about. There was the magisterial chair and scholars' stools covered with bits of felt or sheep-skin,—more luxury than we had at Eton,—well-thumbed copies of the San-tzŭ-ching,—three character classic,—the Chinese boy's primer, a few cheap writing-materials, and a copy-book in which some little urchin had been making laborious attempts at copying the numerals and other simple characters. By way of ornament there was a picture of four little boys representing the seasons, dancing round a basket of impossible flowers with the most grotesque contortions, with the superscription, "The four seasons when prosperous beget riches." In the cause of letters it was satisfactory to know that we were not interrupting studies, for the dominie had given himself and the boys a holiday, and had betaken himself to a fair at the neighbouring village of Po Li Nao, in order to go to the theatre. It is very funny to hear a class of little fellows droning out the classics, of which they don't

understand a word, in chorus, the tones of the language making a sort of cadence. The system of teaching a boy a lot of characters without their sense, each character simply representing a meaningless sound to him, could only exist in China. We passed Po Li Nao, some fifteen li farther on, and to the great astonishment of the sightseers did not stop to hear a play by a troupe of poor strollers. "What! been to Po Li Nao and didn't go to see the theatre! Ai ya! that's strange!" said a footpad of whom I asked the way. At any rate we saw what was better, Po Li Nao itself, one of the most picturesquely situated little places I have seen in China. It stands at the foot of a bend of low hills, above which rises a towering range of dark, jagged peaks, and beside it winds a clear pebbly stream, breaking here and there against large stones; add to this a few quaint Chinese buildings, plenty of trees, and all the bustle of the fair. We had a difficult sandy track again for the heavy cart; we were 13½ hours on the road, stopped two hours at noon, and only accomplished about thirty miles. We put up at Kwa Yo Erh, where, as at all small places, the people were civility itself, our land-

lord even turning his family out of his own house in order to lodge us comfortably.

14th May.

We took care that our host, who combined the profession of military officer with that of innkeeper, should not lose by his civility, and we parted with mutual expressions of goodwill. We had a climb of it up a steepish hill, on the top of which is a temple to the god of war, and then descended on to the valley of Ku Pei Kŏu by a winding road cut in stages over a precipice such as one finds on a large scale in Switzerland and the Tyrol. More than once on our journey through these mountains I have been put in mind of the Alps, not only by the scenery which, if it were not for the absence of snow and glaciers, would stand the comparison well, but also by the goitres and cretinism which seem to be the curse of mountainous districts. The other day at a cross-road I asked the way of a man who was collecting dung for fuel; he turned round and said very simply, "I know nothing, I'm only an idiot; ask him," pointing to a man ploughing, "he knows everything." Deafness, too, seems

rather common, probably owing to the very hard weather which prevails during some seven months of the year. The old people seem hearty enough, barring their hearing. I came across none of a very advanced age, but one old fellow of seventy-nine was very hearty, and to all appearance likely to remain so, but he was by many years the *doyen* of all I met, and anything past seventy seems to be looked upon as extraordinary.

We had a scorching ride to-day: there was a good deal of electricity in the air, which told upon us when we had been some hours in the saddle. As we were a full hour ahead of our baggage we turned the horses to graze, and sat down by a brook to smoke a cigar. As luck would have it we had no matches; however, there was a house not far off, so the doctor volunteered to go and beg a light. On arriving at the cottage he found forty or fifty people engaged in a "white affair," which is the euphemism for a funeral, because white is the colour of mourning. A dozen or so of the relations, friends, and neighbours were seated round a bier weeping and crooning officially, while the others, waiting till

their turn came for grief, were smoking their pipes and retailing country gossip. They were very civil, and presently—for apparently the attraction of seeing the foreigners was superior to that of mourning by commission for a poor old woman—all, except those actually on duty round the coffin, were crowding about us as merry as possible; even the women with their heads bound up in white cloth as if they had the face-ache turned out to have a peep at us from behind the house, grinning and giggling as if they were assisting at a marriage.

We did not go into the town of Ku Pei Kŏu, but stopped at an inn just outside the gates; so we had all the advantage of the fine view over the Great Wall of China, with pure air to breathe, instead of the garlic and muck-stained atmosphere of the town.

During the whole of our journey from Llama Miao to Ku Pei Kŏu we did not see a single Mongol, much less a camp. The ground is not suited to their nomad and pastoral habits; it is colonised exclusively by Chinese, principally farmers from the province of Shantung. Europeans have very rarely followed this route;

so far as I can make out they have been seen here once, or at most twice.

15th May.

This day week we were shivering in furs at Llama Miao. To-day a gauze shirt was too much; the flies were a perfect pest. It was too hot to do anything but sleep, which they put out of the question. It was not until after dinner that we could venture out. We went up a hill behind the inn, from which we had a fine view of the sun setting behind the heights which the Great Wall scales. In the valley beneath wayfarers were hurrying to reach the town before the closing of the gates; the rear was brought up by a herd of about a hundred pigs, the last travellers who entered China this night by the gates of Ku Pei Kŏu.

About Ku Pei Kŏu and the road back to Peking I wrote to you last year, and this letter is too long already. Three days brought us home to the Legation.

P.S.—By the bye, although the part of Mongolia we visited is set down on the maps as belonging to the province of Chi Li, which it is so far as its government is concerned, I

have spoken of *China* as bounded by the Great Wall. No Mongol living beyond it would consider himself as an inhabitant of China, and the Chinese themselves speak of the places which are "Kŏu-wai," outside the mouth or frontier, as Mongolia. In Stamford's large map of China and Japan you will see how Chang Chia Kŏu, Dolonor or Llama Miao, and Ku Pei Kŏu are placed—some of our other halting-places are also given, but you would hardly recognise them from their spelling.

May 20th—Sunday.—Went round some of the curiosity shops, where I was shown, among other things, a wonderful ewer and cover of rock crystal, about a foot high. I have seen nothing finer of its kind than the carving. In the days of Chien Lung the Magnificent, himself a great patron of art, when a fine piece of rock crystal, jade, or cornelian was brought in from the western mountains as tribute, a committee of taste decided the shape to be given to it, and fixed upon the artist to whom it should be entrusted by Imperial Command.

May 21.—The pious Chinese are all off

these days making a pilgrimage to a holy shrine among the hills, called Miao Fêng Shan, to burn joss-stick as a sovereign prophylactic against disease and misfortune of all kinds.

May 22.—The thermometer standing at 100° in the shade. The heat frightfully oppressive. Happily on the following day there came a great thunderstorm, with hailstones as big as pigeon's eggs. This cooled the air. The formation of the hailstones was curious: a nodule of ice surrounded by a coating of frozen snow, which in its turn was encased in ice. Bad for heads!

May 27.—An outbreak of the "Heavenly Flowers," or smallpox, causes general consternation and vaccination. Any one who is opposed to vaccination had better see the ravages of this horrible disease in an Eastern city; so common is it that no Chinaman who has not "put forth the heavenly flowers" is considered quite complete. It is like distemper with dogs in Europe.

May 29.—Dined with Dr. and Mrs. Wells Williams at the American Legation, a handsome and delightful couple now entering middle age. Dr. Williams, the author of a

Chinese dictionary, and that most encyclopædic book *The Middle Kingdom*, is one of the most learned of sinologues. He began his career in China as a missionary in the south, but his great talents rendered him necessary to the American Government, and he is now *chargé d'affaires* here. He was very interesting, talking, among other subjects, on the paper currency. Bank-notes, it seems, were first introduced in the days of the Sung dynasty, during the reign of Shao Hsing (A.D. 1170). At that time copper was scarce, so the Government issued great notes (Ta Chao) of the value of 1000 to 5000 copper cash, and small notes (Hsiao Chao) worth from 100 to 700 cash. Officers were appointed everywhere to issue and receive these notes. They were to be renewed within seven years, and fifteen cash in every thousand were deducted for the expense of making them. They were said to be "kung ssŭ pien," "convenient both for the public and for private individuals." Marco Polo mentions them with praise.

June 1.—My new colleague, Sir Eric Farquhar, arrived from England. An old schoolfellow. He was accompanied by Mr.

Brenchley, a most accomplished traveller, who seems to have been all over the world, and being a great naturalist and profound observer, is a charming companion to boot.

June 10.—The last few days have been occupied in showing Brenchley the lions of Peking. To-day we went to breakfast at a fashionable Chinese restaurant, "The House of Eternal Prosperity," in the Ta Shih La Erh, which we call Curio Street. In order that we might make a genteel appearance and observe the ten thousand proprieties, my servant Chang Hsi insisted on our going in carts. Walking is so vulgar! We were jolted and bruised over the indescribable ruts and paving-stones to a horrible degree, but our dignity was kept up. We found the House of Eternal Prosperity very shabby and dirty, and we should have had a much better breakfast at home.

June 15-20.—Two more parties of travellers arrived. More work as "intelligent guide."

LETTER XXVII

TA-CHIO-SSŬ,
THE TEMPLE OF GREAT REPOSE,
23rd July 1866.

THE last mail took you no letter from me because I was far away in Mongolia. My first intention had been merely to go as far as Chang Chia Kŏu, to accompany Brenchley and make the arrangements for his journey across Siberia to Russia. Ultimately, however, the party increased to four, of whom one was a lady, and our programme grew in proportion. We started on June the 21st. We were detained four or five days at Chang Chia Kŏu, owing to the chicanery of a faithless Mongol camel-owner who did not keep faith with us. However, it is a bright, cheerful little town, so I did not much mind. It was gayer than ever too, for on account of the great drought, morning, noon, and night, the town

was being paraded by processions of distressed agriculturists praying for rain. Preceded by squeaky clarionets, drums, and gongs, a crowd of men and boys with wreaths of willow round their heads and middles, above which their sunburnt bodies were naked, some wearing fillets of red paper, others doing penance with their necks enclosed in the heavy board used as a punishment for prisoners, escorted a sedan chair with a tiny god in it to the Lung Wang Miao, the Temple of the Dragon Prince, whom, being a water-god, it is well to propitiate in cases of drought.[1] Some of the votaries were armed with spears and rude guns, which from time to time they fired off, and altogether there was din and clatter enough even to please a Chinese crowd. "Ah! these agriculturists!" said a Chinese gentleman who was looking on with the most supreme contempt, and whom I asked for an explanation of the affair; "they are

[1] In the far East the dragon, associated in our myths with fire, is a water spirit. At the miraculous birth of Buddha two heavenly dragons appeared in the air, the one spouting cold, the other warm water, to wash the holy babe. Hence bronze dragons are commonly seen in temples and in other places as water-spouts, where in the West the lion's head would be used. The lion as a fountain comes from the ancient Egyptians, whose astronomers held that the rising of the Nile was bound to take place when the sun was in Leo.

never content! It's always too much rain or too little, or something the matter. Unsurpassable!" The prayers of the worthy people were heard, however, and the Dragon Prince took a favourable view of their case, for the first day of my stay at Chang Chia Kŏu there came a thunderstorm, with a downfall of rain, such as one seldom sees out of the tropics, and there was more or less rain all the time we were there. The coincidence will not improve the chances of an American missionary who has been physicking the natives of Chang Chia Kŏu for rather more than a year, but in spite of the drastic arguments of blue pill and black dose, has not yet made a convert.

There are three main passes leading from China into Mongolia, Chang Chia Kŏu, Ku Pei Kŏu, and between them Tu Shih Kŏu, which is smaller and less important, but which I had not seen. The plan which I proposed, and which my companions accepted, was to make a tour of the three, following a line outside, but in some parts parallel with the Great Wall.

We left Chang Chia Kŏu on the 30th of June. It was frightfully hot, but I had provided a refuge against the scorching sun, which

at mid-day would have been unbearable. We each had with us a mule litter, a sort of long carriage in which a single person can almost lie at full length, with shafts behind and before which are borne on mules' backs. This sounds rather a comfortable and luxurious way of travelling, seeing that one's bed and pillows are placed inside. As a fact it is horridly jolty and sea-sicky; then no sooner has one established one's self in a tolerably easy position and dozed off (which is inevitable, and makes one very hot and uncomfortable), than one is called upon by the muleteer to trim the boat: "Your Excellency! please sit a little more to the south. Your Excellency's weight is all to the north! The north side of that mule's back is becoming terribly galled." My muleteer was a very original character. He had a prodigious talent for screaming out Chinese anacreontics at the top of his voice, and for dramatic recitations and imitations of popular actors. He was always the last of the muleteers to get up in the morning, and when at last I took to waking him with the crack of a hunting-whip, he only grumbled good-humouredly and said the "old lord," meaning me, was very hard upon him,

but none the more did he get up to feed his mules. He had been to Mongolia once with Sir Frederic Bruce, to whom he applied the most glowing eulogy that a Chinaman can bestow, holding up his thumb; words could go no further. Altogether Cha Mai Chu—that is his name—was the merriest, grinningest, and most laughable devil that I have ever come across here. When we arrived at the inn, and the six muleteers, having acquiesced in the landlord's civil proposal, "You six gentlemen" (if you could but see the six gentlemen!) "will dine together, I suppose," had sat down to the coarse fare, a sort of macaroni with garlic and pickles, which they allow themselves, Cha Mai Chu used to keep the other five in a roar of laughter, and I rather think that by that means he contrived to suck up the lion's share of the white strings.

As the first part of our road, as far as Chang-Ma-Tzŭ-Chin, was but a repetition of the same journey which I wrote about in my last long letter describing my expedition to Llama Miao, I spare you the repetition. Farther on we followed a route new to me, and in some places not visited before by foreigners. This may interest you. After leaving Chang-

Ma-Tzû-Chin on the 3rd July, instead of pushing on northwards across Mongolia, which at this season is far more worthy of its Chinese name, "The Land of Grass," than it was two months ago, we steered south-east back towards China, across a sandy plain, richly cultivated with potatoes and other crops. In the midst of this sandy tract stands a little tumble-down Chinese village called Lien Hwa Tan, "the lotus-flower fountain," from an old tradition that there once stood there a temple in which was a fountain flourishing with lotus-flowers. Now it is a case of *lucus a non*, for temple, fountain, and flowers have all faded away together, and as for anything flourishing, there was barely a roof for us to eat our breakfasts under. We were making for a ridge of green hills, from the top of which I expected to come in sight of the Great Wall, which, however, did not appear until we had reached the bottom of an emerald-green valley, with luxuriant vegetation, lying between rugged and bare rocks. Hard by Tu Shih Kŏu the great brick monster showed itself again, but in ruins, undermined and sapped by continual watercourses. The rocks here are very fine, picturesque and as-

tonishing in their shapes. Tu Shih Kŏu itself is a queer little old town. The fortifications and walls are falling into decay, uncared for and unrepaired. In a few years, I should think, its quaint gables and towers and useless fortifications will have crumbled away; but on the other hand, inside the walls there are shops, neat and tidy, and houses showing signs of some prosperity. Perhaps, after all, there is some method in the apparent madness of letting the old remains of protection against border warfare go to the dogs. I have often told you how bothered travellers are here on arriving at an inn by gapers and starers. The nuisance was multiplied a hundred-fold on this excursion by the fact of our having a lady with us. I was armed with special letters of recommendation from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to the high mandarins along the road, and as soon as these last heard that we were annoyed, they hastened to send us "po-po" (sweetmeats) and protection, but before this arrived I had been obliged to take the law into my own hands, for three dirty, old, gray blackguards had actually, using their wet thumbs as centre-bits, made holes in one of our paper windows, at which they were

playing peeping Tom, and so interested by what they saw that they did not hear Retribution stealing up on tiptoe armed with a hunting-whip. Retribution, that is myself, tied their three nasty old tails together and packed them off howling, to the great delight of their friends and relations, who quite recognised the breach of Tao Li of which they had been guilty. An appeal to Tao Li, good manners, or propriety, is always a trump card to play when in difficulties with a Chinese crowd.

We only stayed one night at Tu Shih Kŏu, and then rode back through another pass to the fresh air of the steppe. We passed the night at a little hamlet called Chang Leang. There was but one inn, and that was full, and we should have had to pass the night *al fresco* if a good-natured Bachelor of Arts returning from Llama Miao to Tu Shih Kŏu had not consented to push on and give us up his room for the lady of our party. The rest of us managed to huddle up somehow. Never in all my wanderings here have I had to sleep in such queer places as I did on this journey. The villages were poor, the inns worse; and instead of having the high place, we males were bound

to put up with holes such as the very beggars in England would back out of. However, the game was worth the candle so far as scenery was concerned, and then the air of Mongolia makes up for everything. Even the Alpine Club do not know what fresh air is; they must come to the steppes.

The next day we breakfasted at a felt manufactory, at a village called Ta Tan. The way the Chinese make their felt is very rude and primitive, but the result beats Manchester and cogwheels. A quantity of wool is carded and weighed and scattered evenly over a rush mat. When a sufficient quantity has been laid, the wool is carefully flattened down with a sort of wickerwork fan and sprinkled with boiling water; the mat and wool are then rolled up and tied, and the roll being laid on the ground is kicked backwards and forwards by six men from foot to foot for five minutes. A second layer completes the felt, which is excellent. I wish I could give you an idea of the extreme beauty of our afternoon's ride. After we had left our felt manufactory, the road lay through low hills, along a valley that was perfectly enamelled with wild-flowers,

principally yellow ones, a real blaze of gold—wild roses, ranunculus, amaryllis, peony, daphne, potentilla, pinks, purple iris, gorgeous tiger and Turk's cap lilies, and poppies which pay the Emperor of China the compliment of wearing his colours, besides a host of others—a mass of beauties. A violent contrast to the richness of the pasture are the herds of camels, who at this time of year, coatless, mangy, emaciated, and so weak as hardly to be able to move along, are turned out to get rid of the sores on their backs and recruit for their hard work in autumn, winter, and spring. Poor brutes! pitiable as they look, this must be the happiest season of their year; they well earn their rest. Along this wild garden we gradually ascended—so gradually that it was not until we had reached the top of the pass that opens out between two rocks on a panorama of high hills, range upon range lying at our feet, that we had any idea how high we were. I think this view as I saw it, with the sun setting in the distance and the remains of a storm rolling away over the mountains, is one of the finest I have ever seen. The mountains themselves are savage and barren,

and in the valleys clusters of trees mark where Chinese homesteads stand, so poor that not even eggs are to be bought there. In one of these, at a place called Pa Ti, half farmhouse, half inn, we slept, I in a sort of barn, my bed on the ground, my dressing-table a nether mill-stone, and my washhand-stand the carcase of an old cart. The sun was rising when we started down the valley, which really is the grandest thing I have seen in China, and barring the attractions of snow and ice, it seems to me the Alps have nothing finer to show. Rocks more grim and uncouth there cannot be. They take every conceivable shape —men's heads, tigers, lions, citadels with turrets and battlements of living rock, are easily conjured up. Then there are huge boulders that look as if a breath would blow them down, so delicately are they poised upon points apparently quite unfit to bear their weight. It is a valley which makes one think of old fairy tales about giants and dwarfs and ogres' castles. The poor commonplace Chinese drudges who inhabit it are ill-suited to their home. The best part of the scenery ends some fifteen miles down the valley, at a hill

called Llama Shan ("The Llama's Hills)"—two enormous pyramidical rocks, at the foot of which is a village to which they give their name. On one rock, high upon a flat surface hard to climb to, is painted a rude picture of Buddha, with a glory round his head and his finger and thumb held up in orthodox form. The painting is of old date, but pious hands have recently restored it. In the other rock is a cave in which a rather hazy tradition says that in old times a llama or llamas used to retire from the world, and pass their time in the pious contemplation of their own navels. Their reverences showed their taste in the choice of their abode, for it is a lovely spot. We were spoilt for the lower half of the valley by the beauty of the upper half, but we had still before us a fine jagged hill, at the foot of which is Ta Kao, our halting-place, a largish town, rich in gardens. And what would Exeter Hall say if it heard that there are places in these parts which actually cultivate their own poppies? We found a famous inn at Ta Kao, with large rooms freshly papered; but strange to say, on the 6th of July, the stove-beds or kangs were all heated. We,

coming from the cool mountain breezes, found the atmosphere of itself close and stuffy, though in comparison with Peking it was freshness itself; the heated kangs were perfectly insupportable. We wound up a long day with the usual exhibition to a rather tiresome crowd.

We travelled next day along a poverty-stricken but picturesque valley, through which flows a mountain torrent swelled almost to a river by the recent rains. We had to ford it twenty-two times in the course of the day. At one ford one of the mule litters broke down and was smashed to pieces. No great damage was done, and the mule litter was patched together with bits of string and an old nail or two. The way in which the muleteer abused his beasts for the mishap was very funny. Treating the mule as if it had been a human creature, he proceeded in his wrath to take away its younger sister's character. Be it man or mule, horse or pig, or what not, that sins against a Chinese, he immediately tramples on the fair fame of the younger sister of the offender, heaping upon her every foul abuse that he can lay his tongue to. Mingled with his revilings, the muleteer addressed the most humble petitions to me not to dock his

pay, passing from prayer to abuse with wondrous facility. If that mule's younger sister was guilty of one-half the enormities ascribed to her, the punishment has not yet been devised which would be equal to the occasion. The list of her crimes is not fit for publication. When we arrived at Chai Ling the only room that I could have was perfectly untenable from stuffiness and a hot kang which took up a good half of it, so I slept in my litter in the inn-yard, *sub Jove*, which was very cool and pleasant.

The following morning, 8th July, we were awakened by a most glorious sunrise; it was so fresh and nice that I walked the greater part of the day's journey, to the undisguised wonder of the muleteers, who could not in the least understand it. They hold up their thumbs in admiration, and loudly express their high respect for such prowess. "See the old lord! how he walks!" "He has obtained to walk unsurpassably." "This body! Our lords here have not such bodies!" It was but a ten-mile walk; but no Chinese gentleman would dream of attempting such a feat. We all went beetle-mad this day, one of our party being an entomologist. Under one jujube-tree we found so

many varieties of insects of different kinds that it became perfectly exciting; even the muleteers caught the fever and began to take a certain interest in the hunt, but were rather afraid of the quarry. At the end of a very pretty mountain walk we found the "Inn of Flourishing Righteousness," with a large yard full of picturesque groups of half-naked drovers and muleteers. We were well lodged and very comfortable.

The next morning we came down the pass on to Ku Pei Kŏu, which I found as attractive as ever. I put up at my old quarters outside the town. Of course we rested a day to let the travellers have a ramble on the Great Wall. While they were busy picking up bricks and ferns and other souvenirs of the Great Wall, I fell in with a curious character. He was an old Chinaman, by name Li, by trade a herbalist and naturalist, by adoption a poultry-fancier, and by inspiration a professor of palmistry. He began by telling me a lot of curious facts and properties about different plants and roots, but as their English names were unknown to me I cannot repeat them. Certain of them were to cure the hot, others to repel the cold influence. Lizards

he pointed to as a deadly poison (internal) to horses and cattle. After he had discoursed to me some time, he asked to look at my hand; and then he really surprised me. He told me things about myself and family which are certainly known to few people but ourselves; that they should have become known to a poor cottager living on a hillside near a little out-of-the-way town at the farther extremity of Asia is impossible. We shall see if what he said about the future is equally correct. The lines in the hand from which he gathered his auguries were different from those which used to be read in Europe; he explained his science to me, but as he did so in verse, and in the jargon of the trade, I could not make much of it. He invited me afterwards to his cottage—such a pretty little spot, with a glorious vine trained so as to make a covered Pergola in front of it. He passes his life here contentedly, seldom going to the town but when he needs to sell his herbs or his chickens. As soon as he made his appearance with me a whole pack of dirty little brats, all stark naked, came trooping out to welcome him and salute their father's guest according to manners.

I had hoped to have pushed so far as Jo

Hol, the imperial palace and hunting forest, but one of my companions struck work, and I was obliged to return to Peking, having been within two days of my goal, which I hope, however, to reach another time.

LETTER XXVIII

TA-CHIO-SSŬ, *4th August* 1866.

WHEN I returned from Mongolia three weeks ago I found that all the world, that is to say, the three or four diplomatists who compose our world, had very wisely taken itself off to the country. So early as last February I had secured this "Temple of Great Repose," and I lost no time in coming out here. It is too far from Peking to be very convenient; but it is well worth the extra ride, and the advantage of being fifteen miles from the other temples inhabited by Europeans is incalculable; one is not subject to perpetual interruptions by people who, being bored themselves, come in and inflict their boredom upon others. It is a great undertaking moving out to the hills. We are obliged to take absolutely our whole *ménage*, and almost all our furniture with us. I think you would have laughed at my procession;

there were fourteen carts full of every kind of movable—our whole poultry-yard clucking and cackling out of coops and baskets, and a cow with her calf. This must seem strange to you, who would certainly not dream of taking your hens, ducks, and cows with you from town to the country: it is only another instance of the universal topsy-turviness of things in China, again demonstrated by the fact that the farther one gets from town the dearer everything becomes, there being no market and no competition, so that the owner of a leg of mutton can just charge what he pleases for it, knowing that you must either buy at his price or go without it altogether. It is a beautiful ride out here, past Hai Tien, a little village with a smart inn at which the Pekingese may be seen by scores, naked to the waist, and enjoying an outing, after their fashion, with chopsticks and rice, tea and infinitesimal pipes, past Yuen Ming Yuen and Wan Shao Shan, or rather its ruins, past flourishing cornfields and picturesque hamlets, past temples and shrines innumerable, along stony roads which the rains have turned into canals so deep that the carters are obliged to cast lots for which shall strip his

very dirty body and go in to see whether the carts can pass or not. It was quite dark before I reached the temple, after eight hours' ride under the hottest sun I ever remember to have felt. Indeed I had a sad proof of its strength the next day, for my brown pony, Hop-o'-my-thumb, who had carried me so well over so many hundred miles, died of sunstroke after a few hours' illness. Poor little beast! He was a great pet, and as fond of me as a dog. When I went down to his stable shortly before he died he put his head on my shoulder and looked so piteously in my face. The Chinese veterinary surgeon (they are rather clever at that) declares that he was struck by the sun the day before while he was being led. He was the strongest, stoutest little beast you ever saw, never sick nor sorry, and used to trot into Peking after a 700-mile journey as if he had just been out for a morning's exercise. He is the third horse that I have lost from one cause or another since last September. Bad luck, is it not?

This is certainly the prettiest temple and the most charming summer residence that I have seen near Peking. The temple stands in a

nest of trees—cedars, pines, firs, and poplars—a perpetual fountain runs through all its courts, and there seems always to be a cool breeze blowing. While our friends are complaining of being roasted and baked in their temples, we here are revelling in fresh air. Here is a translation of an account of Ta Chio Ssŭ by a Chinese gentleman :—

"Seventy li (23 miles) from the walls of Peking there stood in the time of the Liao a temple called Ling Chuan Ssŭ, 'The temple of the Spiritual Fountain.' In the reign of the Emperor Hsuan Tê of the Ming dynasty it was restored, and the name changed to Ta Chio Ssŭ, 'The temple of Great Repose.' There are four shrines: the first is to the Prince of heaven; the second to Ju Lai Fo, the Buddha who reigns in the western heaven; the third to the Yo Shih Fo, the Buddha who presides over medicine; and the fourth and last shrine has an upper story, and in it is the Pu-sa (god of the second class) of Great Compassion. Behind the shrines is a pond with a fountain. In this is a dragon's head carved in stone, out of the mouth of which the spring issues. In front of the pond is a pagoda, on the left and right

hands of which are old fir-trees, one on each side, about which an old tradition says that they never can overtop the pagoda, hence the spot is called 'Sung ta chi,' or 'The firs and pagoda level.' Besides this, outside the shrine of the Prince of heaven, on either side there is a stone called the dragon stone and the tiger stone, from their resemblance to those animals. In front of these there is a stone bridge with a pond of water on each side, and in the ponds there are a fountain and lotus flowers and gold fish. By the side of the ponds is a dragon's claw tree, in the shape of lions playing, whence it is called the Lion Tree. The temple is built on the west, facing the east; on its south side is an imperial residence called Ssŭ Yi Tang, 'The Hall of the Four Proprieties.' In the hall stands an imperial throne. In the garden are four trees—peonies and two Yu Lan Hwa trees, magnolias. Behind this hall is the 'Pavilion of the Reposing Clouds,' 'Chi Yün Hsuan,' in front of which are bright bamboos and dark green firs interlaced like a forest, a capital refuge from the heat in midsummer, with plenty to see."

My friend Liu, who wrote the description which I have translated above, has left out one

of the greatest charms of the place. Just behind the "Pavilion of the Reposing Clouds," in which we live, is a most beautiful rock work, all covered with tufts of feathery grass, mosses, and ferns, and lycopods: down this and into an artificial basin, which is screened from the sun by a network of fir branches, comes tumbling a deliciously cool fountain scented with pine needles, which gives us a famous shower-bath twice a day—a real luxury. Close by my fountain is a little summer-house, in which the Emperor Chien Lung was transacting business one day with his ministers, and feeling inspired by the influence of the place got through his work greatly to his satisfaction, so he called the summer-house "The Pavilion of the Understanding of Important Matters." I wonder whether I have given you an idea of what a very pretty place this is? It is almost enough to tempt a man to turn Buddhist priest, and abstracting himself from the unrealities of this life, pass his hour on earth in reflecting upon the beauties of the hopelessly unattainable Nirvana (I don't suppose you know what that is—so much the better. It will be like that "blessed word Mesopotamia" to the old

woman at church). The only pity is that mosquitoes and sand-flies sound such a lively recall to the reality of the disagreeable.

The monastery is richly endowed with lands, so much so as to be independent of the assistance from Government, to which, as an imperial temple, it would be entitled. The place looks richer than most of the temples about here. There is no magnificence, but it has a comfortable, well-to-do appearance, the grounds and buildings being properly kept up. All over the gardens there are notices to "relations and friends" who may visit the temple to abstain from damaging buildings and trees, plucking flowers or cutting down the bamboos, a notice the spirit of which, as it says, "all respectable persons will observe of their own accord, and those who do not will be fined." First and last, monks and laymen, there are some fifty persons employed about the temple. The abbot himself finds it dull, so he remains at Peking enjoying himself. His second in command is a charming monk, very clean in his person and especially natty about his boots. He is very intelligent, too, and comes and sits with me by the hour talking Buddhism. This is an

extremely religious temple—prayers, liturgies, drum and gong beating, seem to be going on very constantly. But except on the 1st and 15th of every moon and other holidays the novices are put on active service, the monks enjoying an unbroken idleness; they are apparently cursed with an unquenchable thirst, but as a fountain of perennial tea flows for them they are not to be pitied. I suppose you would ask the name of my friend with the neat boots; this would be an arch mistake and violation of good-breeding on your part. When a man shaves his tail and turns monk he cuts himself off from the whole world, including his family, whose name even he no longer bears. To remind him of this would be quite ill-bred, but as it is inconvenient that a monk—who, however much he may renounce the vanities of this life, must occasionally be brought in contact with that extremely unreal idea, the world—should have no designation at all, he adopts two words or characters as his appellation, which on no account must you call his name. You ask him what is his "honourable above and below"; this refers to the two characters, one of which is written above the other. My

friend's "honourable above and below" is Fo Kwo. As a Buddhist monk must not be asked his name, so a Taoist monk must not be asked his age, although it is one of the complimentary routine questions in China.

The neighbourhood round about here is as charming as the place itself. The fields are richly cultivated; there is plenty of hedge-row timber, and the villages are very picturesque and well shaded. The hills are beautifully shaped, and take fine colours of an evening. The one thing wanting is water, which is missing all over this part of China. Nothing can be prettier than the cottages of the villagers with their long, low eaves; each has its little garden hedged in by a fence of tall millet, over which are trained gourds and other creepers. There is generally, too, a millet-straw shed with a vine creeping about it, and under this the labourers sit of an evening and drink their tea, a picture of contentment. The temples, both Taoist and Buddhist, are numerous. Yesterday I scrambled up to a very pretty one on the top of a great eminence so steep that it is called by the Chinese the "Wall Mountain." I found a most charming little monastery built in tiers, I

should have said terraces had it not been so tiny, which reminded me of the tiers of the Rhenish vineyards. Their reverences the monks had all gone off to Peking on a lark, but I was hospitably entertained with tea by two lay attendants, for whose benefit I in return emptied my cigar-case. What a queer existence these people lead perched up on the top of a high hill! They are so stay-at-home that they hardly seem to care even to go down on to the plain. And as to going to Peking, none but the better-to-do monks dream of such dissipation. You may imagine what a state of crass ignorance they live in. For faces expressing brutal stupidity there is nothing to equal the Chinese monks, except the Thibetan llamas, between whom and drivelling idiotcy there is no missing link. My friend here, Fo Kwo, is a brilliant exception. Monks and laymen alike—all our neighbours—vie with one another in civility to us. They all stop one to have a chat, and as for tea, I might drown myself in a butt of it if I had a mind. The women, however—and in one village there are some very pretty ones—are as *farouches* as wild deer. As I ride in at

one end of a village I see them scuttling off into their houses, with their babies on their backs, as fast as their poor deformed feet will let them. If by chance I overtake them, they scowl at me as if I really were the devil they call me. During the whole time I have been in China, I do not think that I have three times been addressed by Chinese women; the rare exceptions have always been wrinkled old hags —of course I do not count beggars. *Ces dames* don't love us. They are always the first to get up the cry of "Kwei tzŭ" (devils) against us, and I almost think that they verily believe that there is something uncanny about us, or at any rate that there is no villainy of which we are not capable. However, I think that last year I told you some of their beliefs with respect to us.

Farquhar joined me on the 20th July, bringing with him Dr. Pogojeff from the Russian summer quarters at Pa Ta Chu—a group of temples nearer Peking, where most of the Legations spend the hot season. They are delighted with the beauty of this place. Farquhar, who is a very clever artist, has made some lovely sketches. July the 25th was the fifteenth day of the Chinese moon, a high day

with our Buddhist friends. On ordinary days the novices do the drum and gong beating, and intone the prayers (which indeed never seem to cease), but on the 1st and 15th of each moon the higher priests—whose everyday duties seem to be confined to smoking infinite and infinitesimal pipes of tobacco, and sipping cup after cup of amber tea—buckle to the work themselves, leaving their ease and dignity to don their black and yellow robes, and perform service with the rest.

One day out walking we were accosted by a man who told us that he was out for a holiday, and insisted on taking us with him to a village where there was "Jo nao" (fun) going on. We could not resist, so we went with him, and in a by-lane of the said village, on one of the threshing-floors, we found a small raised stage. After we had waited some time, during which the whole village had time to turn out for a good stare at us, a man made his appearance with a very small drum, three pairs of castanets, and three gongs. He was followed by three ladies—one old and two young, and all hideous—and then the performance began with an instrumental overture by the whole strength of

the company, a rattling and jangling which lasted five minutes, and sent us off with our fingers in our ears. We gave the poor people a dollar and were glad to escape; but the villagers were highly delighted, for were not these real actors come all the way from Peking, and, therefore, of course eminent? Mario and Grisi, starring in the provinces, never gave more pleasure to a country audience.

Frightfully hot weather. Do you remember the old quatrain written with a diamond on a pane of glass in the old Foreign Office in Downing Street:—

Je suis copiste,
Affreux métier,
Joyeux ou triste,
Toujours copier!

Copying despatches with the thermometer at 100° in the shade, with a basin of water and a towel at one's side for very necessary hand-wiping, and a pad of blotting-paper over the blank part of one's paper, is indeed an *affreux métier*.

I find that Englishmen who can't speak the language are a little capricious as to exchanging courtesies which the Chinese press upon

them. Sometimes it amuses them immensely to stop and talk twaddle with the natives through an interpreter, while at others, especially if there is just a touch of headache in the case, the Chinamen get short answers. To-day as we were walking we passed a group of peasants, one of whom as usual called out civilly, "Hsie yi hsie pa?" (Won't you sit down a bit?)

F.—"What the devil's he saying?"

Chinaman (thinking to be intelligible by being still louder)—"Hsie yi hsie pa!"

F.—"Don't make that damned noise!"

I.—"He's only asking you to sit down."

F. (savagely)—"Well, he needn't make such a confounded row about it!"

Chinaman (to his friends)—"The gentleman is not very quiet," as if he were speaking of a restive horse.

Friends (assenting)—"Ah! these foreigners! they are indeed terrible people. Unsurpassable! unsurpassable!"

The poor villagers would have been too civil to utter their opinion if they had thought they were understood, but I had held my tongue to hear what they would say.

On the 16th of August we had a delightful addition to our family party in the shape of my old friend Dick Conolly, who has come out as second secretary—the cheeriest of companions.[1]

Next day he and I rode over to see a very famous temple, Hei Lung Tan, a shrine dedicated to the Black Dragon, which was built in the Ming dynasty and repaired in Kâng Hsi's reign. It is an imposing edifice built in three tiers with roofs of the imperial yellow tiles. Here the Black Dragon Prince rests in great dignity. He is surrounded by six satellites — a monster who presides over the thunder, a woman who rules the lightning, a clerk with pen and book who writes down orders for the rainfall, and three others whose functions are not so clear. Of human attendants there was visible but one priest, very dirty and saturated with garlic. The Black Dragon being, like all dragons in this country, a water deity or spirit, there is of course a pond in which he may disport himself. If his priest would only do the same!

[1] Alas! both he and Farquhar fell victims to the climate and died of fever.

The country people are really very civil and kind. The other day we were wandering through a village nestled away among the hills, when several of the peasants came out and brought us delicious pears. One old gentleman, a personage evidently, was just preparing a great sacrifice outside his house to ward off the devil. He had erected an altar on which were placed various fruits and grapes, and in front of it was a great paper boat with dolls in it. This was to be burnt, and with the letting off of many crackers would complete the sacrifice. This, it appears, being the 15th day of the 7th moon, is the feast of departed spirits—a sort of All Souls' Day. It is the anniversary on which the pious Chinaman worships and burns incense at the tombs of his ancestors—the custom over which the Dominicans and Franciscans on the one side, and the Jesuits on the other, started their great feud in the days of the Emperor Kâng Hsi.[1] There are also on this day great ceremonies in honour of the tutelary saints of towns, some deceased minister or warrior appointed by the Emperor as guardian over each town or part of a

[1] See preface.

town. Great honour is paid to one of these patron saints, and men will flock to his shrine to dedicate themselves to his service, so that a man, for instance, who is a groom in this life, will go and offer himself to be the saint's groom in the next world. The effigy of this "Lord of the Walls," as he is called, is paraded through the town where he is supposed to search out evil-doers. There is also a Prince of departed spirits whose shrine is largely attended on this day. A stage is raised and priests are engaged to read prayers and distribute food for the spirits, that those who have died a violent death may be released from Purgatory. At midnight huge paper images, placed in a boat in order that the spirits may pass the river Nai-ho, a sort of Styx, are solemnly burnt, and the feast is over. The feast is called Yu Lang Hai, "The assembly of the Bowl and Flower." My teacher explains this, saying that on board the boat there is a Buddhist god called Ti Tsang Wang, who gives the ghosts of the departed a bowl and flower as a token of release from their sins, so that they may cross the river which is a gulf between them and Paradise.

LETTER XXIX

PEKING, *7th September* 1866.

SOME time ago I was invited to go to the play by the great curio merchant here—Han Chang-kwei-ti. As the Pekingese theatres have a great celebrity, I ought to give you some account of them.

There are a great many theatres in the Chinese city, their situation being marked by a few masks, lay figures, images of tortoises or dragons, or other queer beasts; though indeed no sign is necessary to indicate their whereabouts, for the infernal din which comes from them the whole day long would guide any one to them. The theatres are the property of restaurateurs, who engage a company of actors to come and play for so many days, so that the troupes are constantly changing quarters. You go in by a long passage, which leads into a lofty and spacious hall, lighted from the top, and sur-

rounded by a gallery. In the pit, or body of the hall, are tables at which the people sit drinking tea, eating sweetmeats, or with papers of fried melon and gourd seeds before them. This is the place of the poorer people; the rank and fashion go to the gallery, part of which is divided into private boxes. At one end of the hall is a raised platform, without scenes or appliances of any kind, open at the sides, and separated from the dressing-room by two doors with curtains; at the back of the stage sit the orchestra, five or six performers, all of whom play upon several instruments, which they take up in turn, according to the character of the music. The chief instruments are fiddles, lutes, clarionets, flutes, a sort of mouth organ, and any number of variety of gongs, drums, and cymbals. I talk of fiddles, etc., for simplicity's sake, but you know a Chinese fiddle is no more like a European fiddle than a Chinaman with his pig-tail is like a European in a chimney-pot hat.

Nothing could be more rude or primitive than the state of the drama. The tragedies are all strutting and mouthing; roaring in a bass voice that seems to come out of the

actor's boots, or squeaking in a falsetto shrill enough to set your teeth on edge. The whole of the words are declaimed in a sort of recitative, which is more than half drowned by the drums and gongs. The language of tragedies is the old literary style and very obscure, and as if to make it still more difficult to the Pekingese, the actors all affect the Soochow dialect as the mother-tongue of the stage. The consequence of this is that even a well-educated Chinaman will make a very poor guess at the plot unless he has read the tragedy beforehand. Not understanding what is going on does not, however, seem to affect the enjoyment of the audience, nine-tenths of whom could no more tell you what the play is all about than I could.

As there is no scenery or stage appliances a great deal must be supplied by the imagination. A lady coming in with an attendant in the plain clothes of a Pekingese coolie, holding horizontally on each side of her two flags on which are painted wheels and clouds, is a fairy entering in her chariot of clouds. A warrior brandishes a whip to show that he is on horseback; to dismount, he makes a pirouette on one leg and

throws down his whip; to remount, he makes a pirouette on the other leg and picks it up again. But let me tell you the plot of the tragedy I saw, as Han Chang-kwei-ti explained it to me.

A warrior in white has an everlasting feud with a rebel in red, who always gets the better of him, and performs the most astounding *pas seuls*, making quite appalling faces (heightened by streaks of red, blue, and white paint) to the terror of the whole empire, as represented by five old men and two little boys in white. The warrior in white, after a series of stage combats with the rebel in red, which it would break the heart of our best pantomimists to imitate, sits down in an arm-chair and tucks up one leg under him, by which the audience are to understand that he has gone to sleep in a lonely forest. He then dreams that the ghost of his father appears to him to teach him a trick and give him a sword, by the aid of which he may circumvent the rebel in red. The dream is represented by his getting up from his chair and acting through the scene with his father's ghost, after which he sits down in the same posture as before. During one of his dead father's speeches, which may have struck him,

as they did me, as rather tedious, the actor felt a little thirsty, so he called for a cup of tea, which a coolie brought to him, and he drank it with his face to the audience, gargling his throat and spitting out the last mouthful without the smallest regard for the situation. Well, the father having stalked out, the warrior tucked up his leg again and then awoke. A final combat of many rounds then terminates in the victory of the warrior, obtained by the grace of his father's sword. The rebel is slain and walks out, and the victorious army, consisting of four wheezy old men, make a triumphal entry into the gates of the capital, which are signified by two coolies holding up two poles with a blue cotton curtain in which a hole has been cut.

The dresses of the tragedians are magnificent. They are stiff with gold and embroidery, and immensely valuable. The masks and painting of the faces are to the last degree grotesque and hideous. The beards and wigs are coarse and clumsily contrived.

After two or three historical pieces have been played a farce follows, and indeed it is time that the proceedings should be enlivened a little. The farces are not difficult to follow (though I

cannot say that I understand writers whom I know to be ignorant of Chinese, and who say that the acting of the Pekingese comedians is so good that the whole play is quite intelligible; I know I was out of my depth often enough, in spite of the admirable acting, and of my being able to understand a great deal of the dialogue). The dialect is the pure Pekingese vernacular, and the dialogue is spoken with the exception of a few songs. The women's parts are played by boys, who imitate to perfection the mincing gait and affectations of the Chinese women—"the carriage as graceful as the weeping willow"—sham small feet are attached to their own boots in order to carry out the illusion, which is quite perfect. These boys are bought in the south and trained up as apprentices. They receive no pay from the head of their troupe, but they earn largish sums by attending the banquets of the Chinese men about town; when they are not actually playing, they go up into the private boxes to the richer visitors, whom they amuse with the last gossip of the green-room.

The farces are too indecent for me to do more than give you a mere sketch of one. Medea does not stop short of doing anything

coram populo, so I give you a sort of Bowdler's family edition of the plot of one that I saw.

A young gentleman of great wealth of the name of Wang has been ruined by a mistress named Yu Tang Chun, who, strange to say, although his money is all spent, still preserves a hankering for him. He, on the other hand, finding himself without a penny, is ashamed to go near her, so he retires to a temple to live by his wits. The scene opens with Yu Tang Chun bewailing his absence and her solitude in a long recitative and song (rather pretty for Chinese music). To her enters the low comedy man—such a good actor, and so full of fun!—who tells her where her lover is, and all about his deplorable state. She determines to go and see him, and take him a present of 300 taels (£100) to enable him to go to Peking and pass his examination. Accordingly, she sets out, and a table with the five offerings is placed upon the stage to represent a temple, to which she goes under the pretence of burning joss stick. As soon as she sees her lover the two set up a wild shriek, and rush into one another's arms. Over what follows it is abso-

lutely necessary to draw a curtain. The play ends by her giving Wang the money. He starts for Peking, and returns in a second or two, having passed a brilliant examination and obtained high office. Sometimes, but rarely, girls are present among the audience, and when this is the case, it is only fair to say that these pieces—the grossness of which passes all belief —are not given. On those occasions the play-bill is made up of military and historic dramas, the propriety of which is as undeniable as their dulness.

The price of admission to the best theatres at Peking is one tiao (about 8d.) to the pit, something more to the gallery, and a private box costs twelve tiaos. As the whole thing is, as I said before, a speculation of the *restaurateur's*, refreshments are hawked about during the whole performance. There is a man who carries about a long pipe (like Herr von Joel with his cigars at Evans's), who is very persistent in seeking custom. If it is hot weather the people in the pit take off their coats and lounge naked to the waist, sitting out the whole performance from noon till seven P.M., after which they pack up what remains to them of

their fruit and melon seeds, and go off home, not having had near enough of it.

I have been three or four times, and find that a couple of hours of the din and smoke are as much as I can stand, besides which I find that eating po-po out of politeness interferes with one's dinner.

My time here is drawing very short. When I told my teacher that I was going away he hummed and hawed, and shifted about uneasily. At last he summoned up courage and said, "Sir, I have one last favour to ask of you. The teachers of the West are very cunning in medicine; they possess many secrets. I have no child, and it is a great sorrow! Bitter is the life of the man who is childless! In vain have we addressed our prayers to the goddess Kwan Yin, my wife remains barren. Sir, if you could give me some drug or some charm to remove this evil, for small favours one can find thanks, but for so great a favour none!"

Dear to man is the fame for abstruse learning! But I was obliged to confess myself at fault.

I start for Japan on Monday week, and then good-bye to Peking!

APPENDIX

HOW MANDARINS ARE MADE

THE literature of no country is so abundant in noble sentiments as that of China. Happy, indeed, would be the people who should be governed according to the precepts of Confucius, of Mencius, and of Lao Tsŭ ! The highest moral and political principles are in every mouth, at the tip of every pen. From the first day of his entering school the Chinese boy learns unctuously to recite the most virtuous precepts of the sages, yet learning is the one road to fortune through robbery, peculation, and extortion in their most refined shapes. With every rise in rank the opportunities of robbing the " Hundred Names " and defrauding the state are multiplied in a ratio increasing like the value of carats in diamonds : the wealth amassed by some of the great mandarins must be something fabulous. Take as an instance the war with Japan. The Chinese soldier, when properly led and fairly treated is an excellent fighting man. It is difficult to believe that the sons of

the braves who under Tsêng Kwo Fan and San Ko Lin Sin, so stubbornly defended the bridge against the French and English in 1860, could have been driven from an impregnable position like Fort Arthur by the Japanese some thirty years later. But what troops could fight without food, arms, ammunition? Food, arms, ammunition, and pay had all found their way into the pockets of the mandarins. Would the brigade of Guards itself have stood to be mown down without being able to fire an effective shot in return? I was told on high authority that at the famous naval battle of the Yalu, which some experts have quoted as an object lesson in the naval warfare of the future, on the Chinese side only three live shells were fired, one of which disabled the Japanese flagship, and sent her steaming away into space. The comparison of the bankers' books of some of the great mandarins before and after the war would be an interesting study.

The mandarins—one is compelled to use the old Portuguese word for want of a better—are recruited from two classes: the hereditary nobility, and those who obtain office nominally by examination, but often by purchase.

The hereditary nobility is composed of the members of the Imperial family with the five ranks, Kung, Hou, Po, Tsŭ, Nan,—which it has been the fashion to translate by duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron.

The highest rank in the Imperial family is that of Chin Wang—"related prince," or as we should say "Prince of the Blood." In some cases this title is continued from generation to generation; in others there is a sliding scale downward through the ranks of Pei Lo and Pei Tsŭ to that of Kung or duke, below which members of the Imperial family do not descend.

In the same way with subjects, the rank of Kung is sometimes transmitted; in others the son of a Kung becomes a Hou, the son of a Hou a Po, and so on. The inheritor of a title must be the eldest son of the one legitimate wife, and not of a secondary wife, for although polygamy exists in China, there is, except in the case of the Emperor's family, only one legitimately married wife, nor in her lifetime can there be another. The younger sons of nobles, even of the Imperial family, have no rank either by right or by courtesy; but the latter are generally raised to rank by being appointed general officers. Patents of nobility cannot be bought, at any rate not in theory.

The representative of the eldest branch of a family can, in the event of his being childless, adopt the child of a younger branch, and the child so adopted inherits the title. It sometimes happens that a younger brother who has become rich will bribe his eldest brother to adopt his child to the exclusion of the lawful heir and his issue.

The sovereign is, as with us, the fountain of honour, and it is he who confers these titles of nobility, which are accompanied by grants of land. As a general rule the land assigned to a Kung or a Hou would not exceed a circumference of 100 li = 33 miles, to a Po 70 li, and to the two lesser ranks 50 li.

Conspicuous among the nobles of China are the Pa Ta Chia, "the Eight great Families." These are the descendants of the eight Princes who, waiving any claim to the throne, followed the reigning dynasty from Manchuria. Their rank remains unchanged for all generations. The representative of one of these, the Prince of I, was famous in the war of 1860. A year later, at the time of the Prince of Kung's *coup d'état*, he fell into disgrace, and was "presented with the white kerchief" (made to commit suicide).

But the Imperial family and the hereditary nobles at Peking, valuable instruments of obstruction as they doubtless are, form but an infinitesimal portion of that colossal octopus of fraud and corruption which strangles the whole vast empire in its tentacles. The myriads of officials, from the exalted viceroys down to petty bloodsuckers of a rank about equal to that of a parish beadle, are either drawn from the so-called graduates of the examination halls, or have obtained their promotion by purchase—of the latter mode of reaching distinction there is nothing to be

said ; it is beautifully simple. But the examination system is very complicated and deserves some notice.

The following account of how mandarins are made is based upon an article of mine, for the most part translated from a paper by a native graduate, and published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1871:—

At the age of from six to eight years the Chinese boy is removed from the petting and pampering of the women's apartments and is sent to school, where he receives his first lessons in reading and writing as purely mechanical processes. He is taught to read by droning out passages from the classics in hideous unison with his schoolmates, and to write by painting over characters printed on thin whitey-brown paper. This preliminary process of education lasts for some two years or more, at the end of which the young student is looked upon as sufficiently advanced to be instructed in the meaning of what he reads. The books now put into his hands are, of course, the famous Four Books and the Five Classics, every passage in which, with its hidden obscurities and doubtful interpretations, is diligently and painfully explained to him, until not only the text itself, but also every note and commentary with which successive ages of scholars have overlaid it, are familiar in his mouth as household words. Having accomplished this end the youth is allowed to try a flight upon his own wings, and begins to write essays and poetry,

which, by useful and assiduous reading, he must model upon the best patterns. "Poetry of the Tang dynasty, handwriting of the Chin dynasty, essays of the Han dynasty," says the proverb; these, with all humility, should the student endeavour to follow at however great a distance.

As soon as the young man's compositions begin to take some sort of shape, and to satisfy the keen criticism of his master, when his language is neatly fitted to his thoughts, and he does not use so much as a particle out of its place, he may look forward to preparing himself to undergo his examination for the degree of Hsin Tsai, or Bachelor of Arts.

The examiner for this degree is an officer from the Han Lin (lit. Forest of Pencils), or Imperial Academy of Peking, and is specially appointed by the Emperor; one examiner is appointed for each province throughout the country, and he holds his examinations from town to town in the chief places of the province to which he is accredited.

We will suppose the examination to be taking place at Shun Tien Fu, an important city of Chih Li (the province in which Peking is situated). The examiner, having arrived with no small arrogance of dignity, takes up his abode in the Examination Hall inside the town. On an appointed day the undergraduate candidates from the various Chou and Hsien, or lesser towns which are dependent upon Shun Tien Fu, crowd into the hall, and take

their places each according to the township to which he may belong. As soon as his flock is gathered together, the examiner gives out two themes selected from the Four Books to serve as texts for essays, and one subject for an exercise in verse. Each candidate is expected to produce two essays and one set of twelve verses in rhyme; but he has plenty of time to perform his task, for the examination begins at four o'clock in the morning, and the papers are not given in until between five and seven o'clock in the evening. On the third day the examination list is given out: the examiner writes out the names of the successful candidates in order of merit, and gives it to the overseers of the hall, who, carrying it respectfully on their heads, go out and paste it on the wall fronting the entrance gate. Then follows a scene of excitement when the undergraduates besiege the gate to search for their names on the list. (Oxford over again!) "Should they have been successful," says a native account, "they are now entitled to call themselves Hsin Tsai, and are so delighted that in their joy everything in heaven and earth seems lovely to them," and they look forward to the day when they will receive the much-coveted official button.[1] The unhappy plucked ones must make the best of it and try again. Even

[1] There are nine official buttons, each denoting an official rank—each divided into a first and second class. The civilian takes precedence of the military officer—*cedunt arma togæ*.

now the Hsin Tsai's troubles are not over; for there is a second examination, in which they are divided into three classes—the first class being privileged graduates eligible for honorary degrees entitling the possessors to become candidates for bettermost civil appointments. There is yet another distinction open to the privileged bachelors. Once in twelve years the degree of Pa Kung is given to a representative of each petty township: it is also conferred on the successful competitor in an examination held of privileged bachelors, in which case it is awarded to the cleverest, most respectable, and youngest of his class. When certain official appointments of an inferior grade are about to be made, the Emperor summons the bachelors of the grade of Pa Kung to court, where they are again made to go through an examination, and divided into three classes. The members of the first class are employed as brass button mandarins (officials of the seventh, eighth, and ninth classes); those of the second class are sent to be Chih Hsien, or magistrates of small towns; while the remainder are only eligible for employment as assistants in the public examinations.

Such, briefly, are the honours and offices open to a man who has passed his first examination. The degree of Chü Jên is a much more serious affair.

This examination takes place in fixed years; and when the appointed time comes all bachelors ambitious of promotion, together with a class of

graduates called Chien Shêng, who have purchased their degree, prepare in fear and trembling for the ordeal.

On the 6th day of the 8th month of the year an Imperial decree is issued, appointing the officials who are to conduct the examination. There are three chief examiners and eighteen assistant examiners, with a whole number of subordinates, who search the candidates as they come in, to see that no books, or memoranda, or other aids to intelligence, are smuggled in; besides these there is a strong *posse* of Imperial informers, who watch all that goes on, and keep up a sort of secret police in the hall. The whole of the compositions of the masters expectant are handed over to copyists, who transcribe them, lest the handwritings of the candidates being recognised by the examiners there should be any foul play, and the copies so made are compared with the originals by clerks appointed for the purpose. Besides all these persons, there are 180 minor officials who superintend all petty details. The examination is divided into three parts. On the 8th day of the month the first part begins. The candidates are divided into four companies, to each of which is assigned a door. At each of the doors stand two Imperial informers—the one a Manchu, the other a Chinese—whose duty it is to mark off the names of the candidates, and to distribute to each a roll of paper, giving the number of the cell allotted to him,

to which he carries his provision of food and bedding, for he will be locked up in solitary confinement for three days and nights. In the evening, when the candidates have all been pricked in, every door is sealed, and all coming in or going out is rendered impossible.

The exercises set for the first part of the examination consist of three essays from the Four Books, and one composition in verse. The first subject is selected, or supposed to be selected, by the Emperor in person, and the remainder are chosen by the chief examiners. The *Cycle*, an English newspaper published at Shanghai, once gave the texts chosen for such exercises at an examination held at Wu Chang.

I. From the *Lun Yu*, the *Analects of Confucius:* —"Tsŭ Yu, being governor of Wu Ching, the master said to him, 'Have you got such a thing as a real Man in the place?' He answered, 'Here is Tan Tai Mieh Ming, who does not in walking side off by a short cut, nor come to my office except on public business.'"

II. From the *Chung Yung* of Kung Chi, the grandson of Confucius:—"He only who is accomplished, learned, profound, and critical, has wherewith to exercise sound judgment."

III. From the *Shang Mang* of Mencius:—"When any one told Tsŭ Lu that he had a fault he was pleased with him. When Yu heard anybody say a wise thing he bowed to him."

Each of these essays was required to contain not less than three hundred, nor more than eight hundred words.

The theme for the poetical exercise was "An observer of the beauties of Nature being so absorbed as to forget the march of a whole round of seasons."

Such are the proofs of superior wisdom and learning in which if a man excel he is qualified to rule others! Chinese scholarship is very difficult of attainment; perhaps if it were impossible the world would hardly be much the poorer.

When the subjects have been selected and approved by the Emperor, they are sealed up in a box and given over to the care of a chief eunuch of the palace, to be handed to the chief examiners, who cause them to be engraved on wood and printed. On the 10th day of the month the essays are handed in, and the candidates leave the building.

The officers having received the exercises, examine them carefully to see whether there be any informality in them: if they should discover anything like an infringement of prescribed custom the papers are rejected, the peccant candidate's name is struck off the list, and he is incapacitated from taking part in the second examination. If the papers are in due form they are sent into the copying department, where they are copied in red ink; thence into the comparing department, and sealing department, where the mottoes borne by the

originals are pasted on to them. They now find their way into the superintendent's office, and he forwards them to the eighteen junior examiners.

With pain and care, measuring every word and weighing to a nicety the fitness of every particle, these learned men apply themselves to the criticism of the papers before them. Those that find favour in their eyes are docketed as good, and given back to the superintendent, who passes them to the three chiefs. Should they fail to satisfy these they are thrown into the waste-paper basket, but the candidate still has the credit of having passed the first test. Should they satisfy the chiefs they are marked with the character Chung, signifying that they have hit the mark; but only a limited number of candidates are admitted to the degree at one examination.

The second examination takes place on the 11th day of the month, and consists in writing five essays upon texts taken from the Five Classics; the third test, which is held on the 14th of the month, is devoted to the propounding of five sets of questions on the subject of literature, political economy, or general science. According to the *Cycle*, "the first question asked at Wu Chang was of the nature of criticism of the classics; the second question was on historical matters; the third on military colonisation. (The Chinese Government hoping to save their western provinces by allotting land to soldiers

on the frontier line, requiring them to keep themselves in readiness for fighting.) The fourth question entered into the various plans adopted by previous dynasties in the selection of suitable persons to hold the offices of government. The fifth question referred to the ancient and modern geography of Ching Chan Fu, the course of the waters of the Han and the Yangtze, and the history of the Tung Ting Lake." The answers to each of the five questions were to contain a minimum of five hundred words.

It occasionally happens that after the list of successful candidates has been made up, the work of some new bachelor is recommended to the notice of the examiners. Should the essays which he sends in show pre-eminent ability, their fortunate author is rewarded with the degree of Fu Pang, or assistant master; and if the list of Fu Pang be already full, then he is appointed Tan Lu, a distinction bringing with it no advancement in rank in the state, but rendering its possessor eligible for certain offices.

During the examination at Wu Chang a subordinate official of the examination hall was convicted of having passed manuscripts to one of the candidates. The punishment was summary. The official was beheaded, the candidate banished to the frontiers, and the graduate who wrote the forged essay was sentenced to be executed when captured. As the writer of the article in the *Cycle*, from which I have quoted, observes, "It is interesting to find the

Chinese authorities so prompt and just in punishing the guilty. If some unfortunate foreigner had been murdered by these precious literati, the governor would have declared it to be impossible to touch the offenders in the presence of a myriad of members of their order." More probably he would either have declared that he could not find them, or have executed a certain number of jail-birds as substitutes.

Perhaps the candidate was a foolish candidate, and hush-money was either wanting or insufficient. But in that case it was as it should be, for by not bribing he clearly showed his incapacity for holding high official position. He did not recognise the privileges of the class which it was his ambition to enter, and he gave the officers of the hall an opportunity of showing a little cheap zeal in the execution of their duty, to his great discomfiture.

When the three tests are ended and the degrees have all been conferred, the superintendent of the examination hall addresses a petition to the Emperor, praying that a day may be fixed for publishing the names of the successful candidates. This generally takes place on the 10th day of the following month. On the first day of the ceremonies of publication a table is ordered to be set out in the hall called Chih Kung Tang, the Hall of Justice unsurpassed. The three chief examiners, with the two chief superintendents, solemnly take their places at the table, and on either side, spread out diagonally "like a

goose's wings," as the Chinese writer puts it, are the eighteen junior examiners, all clad in their official robes. All this galaxy of learning and wisdom is gathered together to witness the breaking of the seals of the exercises, and to hear the calling out of the names which are written on the list. Next morning, before daybreak, the list is rolled up and placed inside a palanquin of honour, richly decorated with coloured silks ; a procession is formed, headed by standard-bearers carrying emblems, as at a wedding, and the whole heaven is filled with the sound of drums and of delicate music, gongs being beaten to clear the road. Immediately behind the palanquin containing the precious list march the chief examiners and their subordinates, who accompany it outside the Dragon Gate. This gate of the examination hall is so called allegorically, because in the same way as the fish rose from the sea to heaven, and became perfected into the heavenly dragon, so the successful candidates have, by the grace of learning, cast off the grosser clay of which they were formed, and have risen to the heaven of rank and fame. The superintendents of the hall escort the list as far as the outer gate of the provincial capital, where it is hung up on a high platform specially erected for the purpose.

When the list has thus been finally published, etiquette requires that the new Masters of Arts should go and pay their respects to the chief and

junior examiners. At these visits much wine is drunk, and an adjournment to the theatre takes place, where the party witness the deadly dulness of an historical piece, relieved, it is true, by the performance of grossly indecent farces, and by the consumption of the usual refreshments of fried melon-seeds, sweetmeats, cakes, and tea.

In spite of all the pains taken nominally to insure fairness and exclude any possibility of trickery, Chinese ingenuity would belie itself if it did not find means of giving the slip to all law and rule, and of satisfying greed thereby. Though the candidate's name is not known until the papers have been examined and judged, they will be framed in such a way as to let the examiner know who is the author—as, for instance, by agreeing beforehand that the briber's essay shall begin and end with certain words. On the other hand, if the officers of the copying and comparing departments have not received their fee, they can throw any candidate's work all out of tune with the greatest ease. Nor is there any appeal. The copy in red ink which is sent in to the junior examiners stands as the *ipsissima verba* of the writer. By one slip a spiteful copyist may spoil the best essay.

The examination for the third and highest degree, that of Chin Shih, or Doctor, does not differ materially in character from that of Chü Jên or Master of Arts, except in the fact that whereas the latter is held in

provincial capitals, the former is held only at Shun Tien Fu, at which city the candidates from every part of the empire have to attend. The expense and difficulties of what may be a very long and expensive journey naturally tend to limit the number of aspirants.

After the publication of the list of successful candidates a last examination is held at Peking in the Imperial palace. According to their performances in this final test the doctors are divided into three classes. The first class consists only of the three best men in order of merit, who are called respectively Chuang Yüan, Pang Yüan, and Tan Hwa, which might be translated Senior Wrangler, Second Wrangler, and Golden Spoon; the second class contains from seven to ten names; and the third class is made up of the remainder, and may consist of two hundred men or more. At the second part of this examination the doctors are presented to the Son of Heaven, who in person appoints them to various offices in the state. The Senior Wrangler is usually employed as a writer of records in the Forest of Pencils, while the Second Wrangler and the Golden Spoon are appointed to be correctors. All the doctors are sure of obtaining some appointment, but not of keeping it unless they show official capacity, of which the most infallible proof is the liberal opening of a long purse.

"In the olden time," writes a native author, "a

man need only pass the degree of Hsin Tsai, or Bachelor, to be sure of obtaining some office in the state. But nowadays there are too many who buy their rank, so that a man's merit is measured by the capacity of his purse, while the right men are pushed out of the right place. Hence it comes that many a ripe scholar, if he have but enough means to keep the life within him, and be a man of spirit to boot, will rather remain in obscurity as a private individual than be mixed up with such men as hold office. Good men holding aloof, the officials of the country are but a sorry lot after all. How can we be surprised if discontent and treason are rife?"

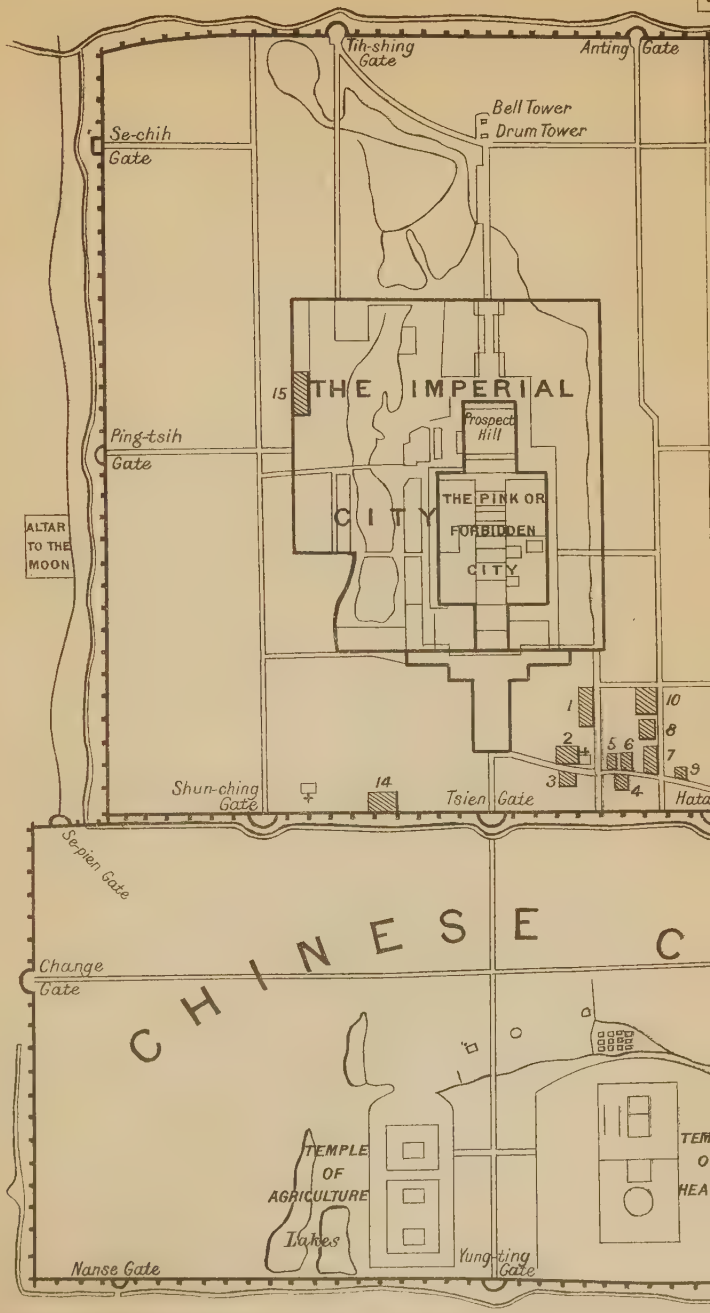
These are the words of a modern scholar, savouring somewhat of sour grapes, it is true. Yet as early as five hundred years before Christ, Lao Tsŭ, the founder of the Taoist sect, pointed out the vanity and hollowness of the system of education and government into which the country was drifting. "If some men," said the sage, "would abandon their learning and cast away their wisdom the people would be benefited a hundred-fold." Of all the Chinese philosophers Lao Tsŭ was probably the one whose teaching of simple virtue approached the nearest to the Christian standard. Confucius himself, after having had an interview with him, said to his disciples, "I know how the birds fly, how the fishes swim, how the beasts run, and the runner may be snared, the swimmer may be hooked, and the

flyer may be shot by the arrow.[1] But there is the dragon. I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Lao Tsŭ, and can only compare him to the dragon."[2]

It can hardly be said that matters have improved since the old days of Lao Tsŭ.

[1] Compare the account given of Solomon's wisdom, 1 Kings iv. 29 :—"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. . . . And he spake three thousand proverbs : and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall : he spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."

[2] *The Speculations of the Old Philosopher Lao Tsŭ*, translated by John Chalmers. London, Trübner and Co.


Tih-shing Gate
Anting Gate
Bell Tower
Drum Tower
Se-chih Gate
THE IMPERIAL
CITY
Prospect Hill
THE PINK OR FORBIDDEN CITY
15
Ping-tsih Gate
ALTAR TO THE MOON
Shun-ching Gate
14
Tsien Gate
Sepien Gate
Change Gate
CHINESE
TEMPLE OF AGRICULTURE
Lakes
Nanse Gate
Yung-ting Gate

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